

HISTORIAN'S OFFICE

Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints.

THE PROPHETIC CONTROVERSY.

A LETTER FROM JAMES J. STRANG TO MRS. COREY.

Saint James, Sept. 26, 1854.

MRS. COREY:—

DEAR SISTER—Your good sister, Mrs. Derby, has done me the kindness to show me your letter of July 31st, in which you ask the “vain usurper,” meaning me, “to write to you, and show forth his strong reasons,” etc., and promise to “answer me according to my arguments.”

I rejoice in reading this promise, believing it is made in all sincerity. I have never yet obtained such a promise from a Brighamite, but God has given me a soul; and I hope for none more worthy than the chronicler of the martyred prophet.*

I shall not complain of you, dear sister, for calling me a *vain usurper*, when in the same line you acknowledge you “know not what claims” I “dare to urge,” meaning that you know not what evidence God has vouchsafed, that he has given me a dispensation of the kingdom.

And as David of old was a fugitive from the wrath of Saul, long and tedious years after God gave him the kingdom, and made him King by his holy anointing; in his company I can endure the name of “fugitive King,” with neither crimson nor blush on my cheek, remembering that Jesus Christ, the heir of David and heir of God, the King of Kings, was also a fugitive from the face of wicked men, and hid himself in dens, and caves, and mountains, and desert places.

But, God's name be praised, though fugitive once, fugitive no longer. It has pleased God, by whose voice I was called, and whose angels anointed me, to give to me the kingdom, and to commit to my

hands deliverance for the oppressed. The little flock fear no longer. But the fear of us is on those that hate us.

God has been too good to me, for me to be resentful for any such unkindness. But would it not be commendable for a noble woman, the beloved historian of a much beloved prophet, to learn from the example of Michael, the Archangel, who durst not bring a railing accusation even against the devil? (Jude 9.) It is said, of old, “Be mindful to entertain strangers for so some have entertained Angels.” In this dispensation the fault of men has not been so much shutting the doors against Angels, as falsely accusing the Prophet and Saints, of whom the accusers “knew not.”

Dropping this subject as one which, from your sensitiveness on the character of the prophet Joseph, I know you will not misappreciate, allow me to tell you that if you “know not what claims I dare to urge,” it is no fault of mine that you remain uninformed; and if I am called on now to show my strong reasons, it is not because I have not shown them often enough already.

My strong reasons were shown more than ten years ago, and as often as any occasion arose from that time to this; and no man who follows Brigham Young has ever attempted to answer them. None ever will. They know they are unanswerable.

More than that, sister: to dispute my prophetic calling, is to say that Joseph Smith is an impostor, and Mormonism a lie. Probably you are not now prepared to take my word for this. I only ask you to take Joseph's.

Joseph gave numerous revelations concerning the law of prophetic succession,

* Mrs. Corey wrote the history of the Smiths, (not published,) called Mother Smith's History.

establishing most distinctly this rule: "That whenever Joseph *ceased to act on earth in the prophetic office*, whether removed by death, by transgression, or by whatever means, another should be raised up in his stead, who should be called by revelation of God, given unto Joseph, and be ordained as he was, by the hand of angels."

Among the multitude of testimonies which Joseph has given that this is the law of God, I will now refer you to the following:

I have sent forth the fullness of my gospel by the hand of my servant Joseph; and I have given unto him the keys of the mysteries of those things which have been sealed, even things which were from the foundation of the world, and the things which shall come from this time until the time of my coming, if he abide in me, and if not, another will I plant in his stead. D. & C., sec. xi, p. 4.

But, behold, verily I say unto thee, no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., for he receiveth them even as Moses. And thou (Oliver Cowdery) shall not command him who is at thy head, and at the head of the church; for I have given him the keys of the mysteries and the revelations which are sealed, until I shall appoint unto them another in his stead. Sec. li, p. 2.

Verily I say unto you the keys of this kingdom shall never be taken from you while thou art in this world, neither in the world to come; nevertheless, through you shall the oracles be given to another, even unto the church. Sec. lxxxv, p. 2.

And this ye shall know assuredly, that there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me. Sec. xiv, p. 1.

But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him, for if it be taken from him he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead; and this shall be a law unto you, that ye receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations or commandments; and this I give unto you that you may not be deceived; that you may know they are not of me. For verily I say unto you that he that is ordained of me shall come in at the gate,

and be ordained as I have told you before. Sec. xiv, p. 2. (Given Feb., 1831.)

Wherefore marvel not, for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you on the earth:—also with John the son of Zacharias;—which John (an angel) I have sent unto you, my servants, Joseph Smith, Jr., and Oliver Cowdery, to ordain you unto this first priesthood which you have received, that you might be called and ordained even as Aaron:—and also with Peter and James and John, (angels,) whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles and especial witnesses of my name, and bear the keys of your ministry; and of the same things which I revealed unto them: unto whom I have committed the keys of my kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last times; and for the fullness of times, in the which I will gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven and which are on earth. Sec. i, p. 2, 3. (Given Sept., 1830.)

Nothing plainer than this is contained in the English language; nothing clearer has been spoken by the voice of prophets, or written by the finger of God.

Joseph no longer stands a prophet on earth. He is not standing among us to guide us as he was when these revelations were given, for God has taken him, and he wears the crown of King and Martyr.

What follows? Either Joseph has given the word of God appointing another in his stead, or those revelations have fallen to the ground, and Joseph has proved himself a false prophet, and Mormonism an imposture.

Neither you nor I can take the latter alternate. We are both obliged, by our faith in Joseph as a true prophet, to say that "*through him God has appointed another in his stead.*"

Who has been so appointed? It is needless to say that there is not a person on earth who pretends to have received such an appointment except myself. During the ten years since the martyrdom of Joseph, I, and I alone, have stood up as a prophet of God, *claiming* to have been appointed by revelation of God

through Joseph, and to have been sent by the hands of Angels, as he was.

Therefore there is no escaping the conclusion that either I am a true prophet, and his lawful successor, or Joseph is a false prophet, and Mormonism an imposture. This is the only alternate with you. With me there is none. Called by the voice of God, and ordained by the hand of Angels, since the day of his death I have known my calling, as he did his in the days of his ministry.

So forcible is the position I have above stated, that for years after Brigham Young assumed to stand at the head of the church, the promise was held out continually that a prophet was yet to rise, who had been appointed by Joseph.

Knowing the attachment of the Saints to the family of the martyred prophet, it was skillfully insinuated that one of the sons of Joseph had been appointed, and that Brigham, to save him from being murdered by the Gentiles, as his father had been, was standing ostensibly in his place and governing by his authority, until the Church, being delivered from the fear of the Gentiles, should be able to acknowledge and defend their prophet. Any one who was in Nauvoo in 1846 and 1847, knows that a majority of those who started on the western exodus, started in this hope.*

*The following testimony on this subject occurs in the published correspondence of Gen. Miller:

Saint James, June 28, 1855.

DEAR BROTHER— * * * On my arrival in Nauvoo, I visited elder John Taylor, of the quorum of the Apostles, who was sick of his wounds received in Carthage jail, at the time of Joseph's death. Dr. Willard Richards was there, and after a few remarks in regard to the mob, I asked him who Joseph had left to succeed him in the prophetic office. He replied, all was right; that there were sealed documents left, which would be opened when the twelve Apostles should get home, that would settle all these matters. Sidney Rigdon had already returned from Pittsburgh, (where he was sent before Joseph's death,) and had made some moves as a leader of the people; and from hints and innuendoes that I heard frequently I was induced to believe that Joseph had designated his son to succeed him in the prophetic office, and on this belief I rested.

On the return of the Twelve there was a public meeting called—the Apostles and Sidney Rigdon on the stand—Brigham Young acting as prin-

In the mean time the papers issued by the Mormons in Nauvoo, New York and Liverpool, were continually preparing the minds of the Saints to expect a prophet for a leader *no more*; telling them, "let no man presume for a moment his place will be filled by another," as though a successor would rob him of his crown; and claiming that the Twelve had power to dictate all the affairs of the Church in all the world, not under the direction of the Presidency, as they did in Joseph's time, but independently as sectarian priests do.†

cipal speaker. Sidney urged his pretensions as a kind of guardian, or temporary leader. Young made a long and loud harangue, and as I had always took him to be a blunderbuss in speaking, and on this occasion to me apparently more so, for the life of me I could not see any point in the course of his remarks, than to overturn Sidney Rigdon's pretensions. As this meeting was a pretty general Conference of the Elders, the Twelve assuming a temporary leadership, which was generally conceded to them, as they were the quorum next in authority to the prophet and Presidency of the whole church, N. K. Whitney and myself were put in nomination as trustees in trust for the church, instead of Joseph Smith, deceased, and were voted in by acclamation, and acknowledged as such by all present. * * *

Subsequent to these times of intense excitement I had frequent attempts at conversation with Brigham Young and H. C. Kimball, in regard to Joseph's leaving one to succeed him in the prophetic office, and in all my attempts to ascertain the desired truth as to that personage, I was invariably met with the innuendo, *stop, or hush*, brother Miller, let there be nothing said in regard to this matter, or we will have little Joseph killed as his father was; inferring indirectly that Joseph Smith had appointed his son Joseph to succeed him in the prophetic office; and I believe this impression was not left on my mind alone, but on the brethren in general, and remains with many until this day. * * *

GEORGE MILLER.

—*Northern Islander, No. 77.*

†The following extract from the first general epistle of the Twelve, lays down expressly that Joseph should have no successor, and as clearly that the twelve should have none, and is the first published avowal of the intention of the Twelve to seize the reins of power in the church:

AN EPISTLE OF THE TWELVE.

To the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, in Nauvoo and all the world—GREETING.

BELOVED BRETHREN— * * * You are now without a prophet present with you in the flesh to guide you; but you are not without apostles, who hold the keys of power to seal on earth that which shall be sealed in heaven, and to PRESIDE OVER ALL THE AFFAIRS OF THE CHURCH IN ALL THE WORLD; being still under the direction of the same God, and being dictated by the same spirit, having the same manifestations of the Holy Ghost to DICTATE ALL THE AFFAIRS OF THE CHURCH IN ALL THE WORLD, to build up the kingdom, upon the foundation that the prophet

This was the burden of their argument continually, till the great mass had got up as far as the Missouri River, and

a little beginning made at Salt Lake; when at the October Conference at the Tabernacle, at Council Bluffs, they sud-

Joseph has laid, WHO STILL HOLDS THE KEYS OF THIS LAST DISPENSATION, AND WILL HOLD THEM TO ALL ETERNITY, as a king and priest unto the most high God, ministering in heaven, ON EARTH, or among the spirits of the departed dead, as seemeth good to him who sent him.

LET NO MAN PRESUME FOR A MOMENT THAT HIS PLACE WILL BE FILLED BY ANOTHER; FOR REMEMBER, HE STANDS IN HIS OWN PLACE, AND ALWAYS WILL; and the Twelve Apostles of this dispensation stand in their own place and always will, both in time and in eternity, to minister, preside and regulate the affairs of the whole church.

How vain are the imaginations of the children of men, to presume for a moment that the slaughter of one, two or a hundred of the leaders of this church could destroy an organization, so perfect in itself and so harmoniously arranged that it will stand while one member of it is alive upon the earth. Brethren, be not alarmed, *for if the Twelve should be taken away, still there are powers and offices in existence which will bear the kingdom of God triumphantly victorious in all the world.* This church may have prophets many, and apostles many, but they are all to stand in due time in their proper organization, under the direction of those who hold the keys. * * *

You may expect to hear from us again.

BRIGHAM YOUNG,
President of the Twelve.

Nauvoo, August 15th, 1844.

—Times and Seasons.

The following letter may perhaps be regarded as a kind of feeler or preparatory step, a careful preparation for what followed:

TO THE SAINTS ABROAD.

DEAR BRETHREN—On hearing of the martyrdom of our beloved prophet and patriarch, you will doubtless need a word of advice and comfort, and look for it from our hands. We would say, therefore, first of all, be still, and know that the Lord is God; and that he will fulfill all things in his own due time; and not one jot or tittle of all his purposes and promises shall fail. Remember, REMEMBER, that the priesthood and the keys of power are held in eternity, as well as in time; and therefore, the servants of God who passed the veil of death are prepared to enter upon a greater and more effectual work, in the speedy accomplishment of the restoration of all things spoken of by his holy prophets.

Remember that all the prophets and saints who have existed since the world began are engaged in this holy work, and are yet in the vineyard, as well as the laborers of the eleventh hour; and are all pledged to establish the kingdom of God on the earth, and to give judgment unto the saints; therefore, none can hinder the rolling on of the eternal purposes of the Great Jehovah. And we have now every reason to believe that the fulfillment of his great purposes are much nearer than we had supposed, and that not many years hence we shall see the kingdom of God coming with power and great glory, to our deliverance. * *

P. P. PRATT,
WILLARD RICHARDS,
JOHN TAYLOR,
W. W. PHELPS.

Nauvoo, July 15th, 1844.

—Times and Seasons.

But at the meeting called by Sidney Rigdon, at Nauvoo, Aug. 6th, the programme of the Twelve was marked out. Though their measure was carried at Nauvoo, they did not venture to give it to

the public until after the publication of their general epistle.

The following is the history of the meeting, as given in the *Times and Seasons* of Sept. 1st, 1844, p. 637:

SPECIAL MEETING.

On the 8th of August, 1844, at a special meeting of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, convened at the stand in the city of Nauvoo, President Brigham Young called the audience to order, and arranged the several quorums according to their standing and the rules of the church. The meeting had been previously called, as stated, to choose a guardian, or trustee for said church.

Elder Phelps opened the meeting by prayer, and President Young then proceeded to speak, and gave his views of the present situation of the church, now that the prophet and patriarch were taken from our midst by the wickedness of our enemies. For the first time since he became a member of the church; a servant of God, a messenger to the nations in the nineteenth century; *for the first time in the kingdom of God, the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb, chosen by revelation, in this last dispensation of the gospel for the winding up scene, present themselves before the saints to stand in their lot according to appointment.* While the prophet lived, we all walked by "sight;" he is taken from us, and we must now walk by "faith." After he had explained matters so satisfactorily that every saint could see that *Elijah's mantle had truly fallen upon the "TWELVE,"* he asked the saints what they wanted. Do you want a guardian, a PROPHET, a spokesman, or what do you want? If you want any of these officers, signify it by raising the right hand. *Not a hand was raised.*

He then gave the Saints his views of what the Lord wanted. Here are the "Twelve," appointed by the finger of God, who holds the keys of the priesthood, and the authority to set in order and regulate the church in all the world. Here is elder Amasa Lyman, and elder Sidney Rigdon; they were Counselors in the First Presidency, and they are Counselors to the Twelve still, if they keep their places; but if either wishes to act as "spokesman" for the prophet Joseph, he must go behind the veil, where Joseph is.

Elder Amasa Lyman followed, and fully accorded with the instructions and views of elder Young. I have been at the back of the prophet Joseph, and I shall be at the back of the "Twelve." There is no need of choosing a guardian or head; the Apostles have the power, as they had anciently, and this is the power that turns the key, and will bear off the kingdom of God in all the world triumphantly.

Elder P. P. Pratt said what had been said was well said.

When the whole subject was properly explained and understood, and Counselor Rigdon refused to have his name voted for as spokesman or guardian, the question was put, "All in favor of supporting the Twelve in their calling, (every quorum, man and woman,) signify it by the uplifted hand;" and the vote was unanimous, no hand being raised in the negative. The next vote was that the Twelve should select and appoint two bishops to act as trustees for the church, according to law. (See, also, Voree Herald, March 16, 1848, pp. 257, 258.)

Here is the doctrine avowed by Brigham Young that the Twelve, FOR THE FIRST TIME in the dispensation, STAND IN THEIR LOT, because the PROPHET'S MANTLE had fallen on them. He

denly turned and acknowledged that the argument had all the time been against them, because the Strangites had adhered to the original constitution of the Church, and they had departed from it; and in order to mend their case so that we should have the best of the argument no longer, they then elected Brigham Young, Prophet, Seer, Revelator, First President, Successor to Joseph Smith, by whatever name the office may be called.*

is sustained in it by Lyman and Pratt, and finally by an unanimous vote of the meeting, which was probably one of the largest ever assembled in Nauvoo. Here is also a declaration that Rigdon and Lyman, by being "COUNSELORS IN THE FIRST PRESIDENCY" before the death of the prophet," were "COUNSELORS TO THE TWELVE" afterward, which is sustained by the acts of the same meeting.

*The election of Brigham Young to the Presidency of the church was at Winter Quarters, in December, 1847. The following account of it is found in the Gospel Herald, (Voree,) Vol. iii, pp. 77, 78, 79:

This is the Brighamite account of the Conference; but whether first published by them in the Frontier Guardian, (Orson Hyde's paper,) or the St. Louis Republican, we cannot now say. It was reprinted in the Herald, from a pamphlet edition.

Minutes of a Conference held Dec. 24th, 1847, at Winter Quarters, Council Bluffs, as taken by Jas. Flanagan.

Conference opened Friday, Dec. 24th, 1847, at 11 o'clock, and was first addressed by elder Woodruff, in preparing the minds of the people for the business and council of the meeting. He made many good preparatory remarks, and was followed by Orson Pratt, who addressed the Conference in a masterly style, on the Presidency of and progress of the church; stating that the church had progressed rapidly, although we had everything to contend with—poverty, persecution, priestcraft, demagoguery, the press, and, worst of all, the opposition of apostates; and that in our *unorganized state*, and we had beaten them all, and had the best prospect we ever had. He asked what the apostates had accomplished, and where are they? He said they could hardly be called a remembrance; they had gone to oblivion—to the shades of night. Still the church was rolling on rapidly, and now, at this period of the church, THEY HAD TO SELECT A FIRST PRESIDENCY and they would admit the first argument of the apostates, (viz., that the organization was not complete) was correct. * * *

Elder G. A. Smith asked if they would lay him up a few log cabins at the time of the jubilee. It was moved that Bro. Henry Miller oversee the job, and carried. Brother Miller expressed himself on the subject, that it could be done, and electioneered in pretty good terms for help to accomplish the work, and have it done at the jubilee, or not come to it at all. Elder O. Pratt said that there was some business to come before the Conference before it closed; that in connection with farming and raising grain that there would have to be some mills to grind it; and another item of business was to choose three First Presidents of the church, to preside over

If an election by a local assembly of the Saints, called together without any such purpose, and authorized by no law to do such an act, is sufficient to make a man a prophet of God, a Seer and a Revelator, the representative on earth of the name and power of the Almighty, then, and then only, have they helped their case.

To pretend that such an election is a fulfillment of that law which requires the leader of this Church to be called by

the whole church; the organization of the church should be completed, and so defeat the Devil and carry out the work of the Lord.

He referred to the Book of Doctrine and Covenants to show how this was to be done; that the time had come when the hands of the Twelve must be liberated by the power and spirit of their calling, to go and push the people together from the ends of the earth to head quarters, and there would be men to lead and guide them to the great and glorious scenes which are yet to be unfolded to their view. G. A. Smith asked how Joseph received his power to preside over the church; and answered, from Peter, James and John, and that power was conferred by him to the Twelve, and they had power to appoint First Presidents of the church. The question was then called for whether the people wanted their First Presidents or not. The house responded unanimously.

A. Lyman spoke on the subject, and said the idea of having their First Presidents in the church was nothing new; that it all had been arranged long since by the council, and there was no danger of going wrong; that all bodies must have a head, and all intelligence must come from the head. And the time had come when ends of the church could not be saved without a head, and the very man who was to be the head had been at the head all the time. He asked who the head was amenable to; and answered, to his head; for no bodies, however great, were so high that they had no head; and that the time had come when the Twelve must lead out the master spirits of the kingdom; must go to the east, west, north and south, and plant the seeds of eternal life.

It was moved and seconded that Brigham Young should be our First President. It was carried unanimously. It was next moved and carried that Heber C. Kimball be the first Counselor of Pres. B. Young. Carried unanimously. It was next moved and seconded that Dr. W. Richards be appointed second Counselor. Carried unanimously. It was moved that John Smith be appointed a Patriarch over the whole church. Carried unanimously. The band played a choice piece of music.

Pres. B. Young said the time had come to dismiss the meeting; that the meeting had been of the best kind, the good spirits had been with us all the time; that joy and peace had filled every bosom, and that if any had come here with any animosity against us, they had lost it before they were among us long. He blessed the saints in the name of the God of Israel, and that he had but little fault to find with any of the saints; that he would do the best he could for the church, and that he would not be burdened or trammelled by any body; that the moves of the church had all been directed right every time, and that our sufferings and trials had not come on account of our wickedness, but the hand of God had directed

the voice of God, and ordained as Joseph was, by the hand of Angels, is so utterly bald that it needs only to be stated, not answered.

And I have the assurance now of Benjamin Clapp, an Elder so much in the confidence of Brigham Young that he has entrusted to him the important mission of selecting locations and establishing stakes in various States, that at this day though publicly sustained in the papers and official documents as Prophet, Seer and Revelator, Brigham disclaims himself any such office, and looks for a prophet yet to rise; thus yet playing fast and loose, to retain his actual position as

them in all of their moves; and that all of their moves were right, and if any one disputed it let him say wherein it was wrong, and say how it could be bettered.

The band then played, when the Conference was dismissed, to meet on the 6th of April, 1848. The number of the congregation was considered about 12,000. In the evening the brethren met to praise the Lord by making merry in the dance. After the house was arranged, the meeting was opened by singing and prayer. President Young led the first figure. The next the Presidents of the Seventies were called on. Then the High Priests, and the whole was conducted in the best order, and came off at 11 o'clock, P. M.

This intention to elect a Prophet had been announced in the general epistle of the Twelve, as follows:

General epistle from the Twelve Apostles, to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, abroad dispersed throughout the earth—GREETING:

Since the murder of President Joseph Smith, many false prophets and false teachers have arisen, and tried to deceive many; during which time we have mostly tarried with the body of the church, or been seeking a new location—leaving those prophets and teachers to run their race undisturbed, who have died natural deaths or committed suicide; and we now, having it in contemplation soon to RE-ORGANIZE THE CHURCH ACCORDING TO THE ORIGINAL PATTERN, WITH A FIRST PRESIDENCY and Patriarch, feel that it will be the privilege of the Twelve, ere long, to spread abroad among the nations, not to hinder the gathering, but to preach the gospel, and push the people (the honest in heart) together from the four quarters of the earth.

BRIGHAM YOUNG, *President.*

WILLARD RICHARDS, *Clerk.*

—*Gospel Herald, (Voree), Vol. ii, p. 249.*

The epistle of the (Brighamite) Twelve to the President in England, dated March, 1849, and published in the Millennial Star, shows that the Presidency had been so elected, by elevating three members of that quorum to that dignity, and filling their places in the Twelve. It is as follows:

On the 12th of February the Presidency and those of the Twelve who were here, met in council, and proceeded to fill the vacancies of that quorum. Elders P. P. Pratt, John Taylor and A.

leader, and hold on to those who are not blind enough to be deceived by a popular election to the Prophetic office.

I perceive that you have put Young's right to be the "leader of the people" upon the words of Joseph, "I now roll the kingdom upon the shoulders of the Twelve, and they must bear off the kingdom."

It strikes me that these words of Joseph are getting a little more definite in their purport and application, and a little more public in their original promulgation, than when they were first appealed to in defense of Brigham Young's usurpation.

Lyman were present, and Charles C. Rich, Lorenzo Snow, Erastus Snow, and Franklin D. Richards were ordained to the apostleship, and numbered among the Twelve, instead of the three who were called to the First Presidency, and Lyman Wight, of Texas, who was disfellowshipped. This accession increased the members here to a majority, and enabled them to act as a quorum. They were then instructed to assist in reorganizing the different quorums here, and in establishing righteousness. They met with the Presidency and others almost daily, and proceeded to organize and ordain the Presidency of the High Priest's quorum, viz.: John Young and his counselors; also Daniel Spencer as President of this stake, and his two counselors, David Fulmer and Willard Snow. They also ordained and set apart a High Council. After this the city was divided into nineteen wards, consisting generally of nine blocks, or seventy-two lots; over each ward a bishop was ordained.

Signed on behalf of the members of the quorum who are in the valley.

PARLEY P. PRATT, *Pres. pro tem.*

FRANCIS D. RICHARDS, *Clerk.*

—*Gospel Herald, (Voree), Vol. iv, pp. 164, 165.*

A more complete change of position could not take place—nor would it be possible for Brigham Young to make a more practical acknowledgement that he had been all wrong from August 8th, 1844, till his election and dance, in the holidays of 1847.

As an election to the prophetic office is invalid and utterly void, it is of no consequence whether it was attended to at a general or local meeting—attended by few or many. But, as another evidence of the baldness of Brigham Young's pretensions, it is worthy of note that this election took place at a kind of holiday jubilee, held in a building forty feet by sixty, which could not contain above eight hundred people. A very small number, certainly, to assume to elect a head of this church.

The minutes of this Conference estimate the number present at twelve thousand; but, for the purpose of making it clear that a *very large number* were present, they also state in the minutes that *at one time* the Tabernacle was full, and that that was forty feet by sixty. A building of that size would seat six hundred people, or contain eight hundred standing; and thus furnishes the true count of the congregation very nearly accurate.

But let that pass. I will take the issue upon your version. The Prophet said to the Conference, "I now roll the kingdom upon the shoulders of the Twelve, and they must bear off the kingdom."

Either this gave to the Twelve the power they exercised from the death of Joseph till the exodus into the wilderness, or it did not. If it did not, there is an end of your argument, and for that period they were usurpers.

But if it did give that power, it gave it from the very time the words fell from the Prophet's lips. It is in the present tense, and very emphatic, "I now roll the kingdom," etc. Whatever new responsibilities these words placed upon the Twelve, whatever new powers they gave them, they took from the moment the words were spoken.

Hence if these words gave Brigham Young or the Quorum of the Twelve the power which he and they exercised, as the chief rulers on earth, of the Church, they gave that power *in presenti*; and they became *at that time* the chief rulers, and superseded Joseph in his office as chief ruler. If the words made Brigham Young Prophet, Seer, Revelator, or anything else, they made him so then, and so far turned Joseph out.

There is no escaping this conclusion. The language is not as in the case of Christ to Peter, "I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom," but, "I now roll the kingdom upon" your shoulders.

So if these words put Brigham in the prophetic office, they put him *in presenti*, and turned Joseph out. And if they do not put him *in presenti* and make Joseph a usurper and an impostor from then to the end of his life, they do not give him the office at all; and Brigham has been a usurper and an impostor from the time he assumed "to dictate all the affairs of the Church in all the world," until elected to the prophetic office by the Conference at Council Bluffs, subsequent to the exodus from Nauvoo; and he stands now just as much

a prophet of God, as men can make him; inducted into office by as sacerdotal forms as a popular election, instead of a call of God, and an evening dance instead of the anointing by the hands of Angels.

If there is anything obnoxious to you in this dressing up of Brigham's sacerdotal office, I ask you only to remember that I did not make his priestly robes. I have only reproduced him before you as I found him dressed by his own organs, the Nauvoo Times and Seasons, and the Council Bluffs Guardian.

In regard to the language which Joseph did use on the occasion you allude to, I suppose you know, as I certainly do, that a little previous to that some things had been done in reference to the kingdom of God, which have never yet been given to the public.

I presume also you know that the language of Joseph had sole reference to the duties which devolved on the Twelve, in consequence of the advance of the dispensation.

I am fully persuaded that you will agree with me, that Joseph did not, by that simple remark, set aside the revelations of God; change the constitution of the Church; abolish the prophetic office; turn himself out of the priesthood, and raise up the Twelve to the supreme headship on earth. Unless he did all these things, there is a full end of Brigham Young's pretensions.

And if he did do all or any of these things, how strangely blind you and I and all the rest of the Church were, that we continued to look to Joseph as our Prophet and leader, who was to dictate all the affairs of the Church in all the world. How blind Joseph and Brigham were, that Joseph continued to act as Prophet, and Brigham to take missions under his direction.

The whole volume of sacred history furnishes but a single example of a Prophet suffering the melancholy fate to survive on earth the call of his successor. I hardly need tell you this one

was Eli, to whom the Lord said, "I will judge thy house forever, for the iniquity which thou knowest; and it shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever." 1 Sam., iii. 13.

But if Brigham's claims are sound, there was less assumption on the part of the rejected Eli than Joseph, and much more of modesty on the part of Brigham than Samuel. For when the word came to Samuel, "rolling the kingdom upon his shoulders," Eli said, "it is from the Lord," and acted as Prophet no longer, but "all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established a Prophet of the Lord." 1 Sam., iii. 20.

If Brigham received any such appointment as you claim, why did not all the Saints from Nauvoo to Manchester, or at least those present at the Conference, know that he was established a Prophet of the Lord? Why did nobody learn it till some months later, and several weeks subsequent to Joseph's martyrdom?

Yes, tell me, why did the Apostles, returning from their eastern mission by different routes, encourage all the Saints, saying, "fear not, for if Joseph is taken, he has appointed another to take his place, and the appointment will be proclaimed as soon as we reach Nauvoo?"

Why were all the Saints in and out of Nauvoo assured, by the few men left in authority there, that Joseph had left important documents in their hands, under seal, which were to be opened on the return of the Apostles, and would show who was to lead the Church?

And, as you insist, down to this date, that "the Twelve have always had charge of all the affairs of the kingdom in all the world,"* it would be well to define your sense of this assertion.

If it means that they had the charge,

*If they had the same charge before the death of Joseph as they assumed immediately afterwards, what a ridiculous speech was that of W. W. Phelps in defense of Brigham's usurpation at Nauvoo, Aug. 8th, 1844, "*for the FIRST time in the kingdom of God, the Twelve Apostles stand in their lot according to appointment.*" It was there admitted that during Joseph's life, they had not been in the office and priesthood which was

etc., "under the directions of the First Presidency," as 'the Book of Doctrine and Covenants says, then where did they get authority to act independently, from the death of Joseph till the election of Brigham, four or five years later, at Council Bluffs.

But if it means that they hold this authority immediately from God, and not mediately through the First Presidency, then by what right did Joseph and his two Counselors dictate them in their administration, until his death? And why have Young, Kimball and Richards been taken out of the Quorum of the Twelve and erected into a First Presidency?

And as their places have been filled in that Quorum, and there are Twelve without them, why do you not stick to your text, and still look to the Twelve to dictate the affairs of the kingdom? If the kingdom is on the shoulders of the Twelve, why are Brigham Young, J. M. Grant† and H. C. Kimball as a First Presidency allowed to bear it off?

I don't like this constant changing; this playing fast and loose; this being every thing by turns, and nothing long. Truth is ever the same. If Brigham is the chosen of God; if he is the anointed leader of the Saints, his right to that office rests upon the same facts now that it did ten years ago.

Why could not those facts be frankly stated, and rest at that? If they justify his claim, they are enough. If they do not all the new inventions which can be spliced on will not make that true which was false in the inception.

For myself, having been truly called to the priesthood after the order of the Son of God, and the Prophetic office, holding the keys of the dispensation, I

assumed by them after his death; and if they then got into their place by getting rid of the First Presidency, what folly it was to crowd them out of their place by setting up a First Presidency again.

†Since the death of Willard Richards, J. M. Grant has been elected to the Presidency, and his place in the Quorum of the Twelve filled.

never had but one story to tell on the true subject, the plain facts in the case, the history of which has never varied.

I might, if I was hard put to it for evidence of my calling, as Brigham Young is, go back to the time when the prophet Joseph in his own house, in the presence of a multitude of witnesses, prophesied on my head, all that has since happened to me, saying, that by my hand God shall deliver his people in the day of their distress, for he would give unto me the keys of the kingdom and the mysteries and revelations, that, standing at the head of the dispensation, I might lead his people to another land, where they should receive an everlasting inheritance as Abraham did, and should be delivered from the power of their enemies.

In like manner I might appeal to the testimony of the Patriarch, Hyrum Smith, given a week later, of what the spirit of God showed to him at the time of ordaining me to the priesthood, to the same import, though in a very different form of language.

But to all this you would answer, just as every man must answer to the word you have taken to justify the Twelve, "that words spoken in discourse, whatever their import, do not confer priesthood; that at best such words can only apply to a power to be conferred in a lawful manner; and however glorious a work the prophet may have foretold on my head, I can only enter upon it when called thereto, according to the law of God." To this I agree, and shall judge any claim set up in behalf of the Twelve by the same standard.

Before proceeding further, I may be allowed to say that since the foregoing was written, I have taken the pains to read it to brother and sister Derby; and that they tell me that it is impossible that any one should have understood the words of Joseph concerning rolling the kingdom upon the shoulders of the Twelve, as you applied them.

By their history of the matter, Joseph was complaining of the Quorums generally, and the Quorum of the Twelve in particular, that they had not attended to the duties devolving on them by their callings; but that he had the duties of all the Quorums to do; and reminding the Twelve that they had the charge of sending out Elders to preach the gospel in all the world, and the keys of opening the gospel to the nations, and that in that sense the responsibility of bearing off the kingdom rested upon them; he told them he would do their duties and carry them on his back no longer; but that he "would now roll the kingdom upon their shoulders."

If this language meant anything, it meant that the duties which, by the law of God, ought to have been performed by the Twelve, under the direction of the First Presidency, he would thereafter require of them, instead of doing what they neglected. Instead of a new authority, and a new priesthood, making them the leaders of the Church, independent of or without a First Presidency, they got merely a rebuke for having neglected to do the duties of their calling under the direction of the First Presidency, and the assurance that they could not longer neglect it with impunity.

Every claim ever set up in behalf of Brigham Young and the Twelve, as leaders of the Church, has evaporated as has this. I suppose that this is the reason he and his advocates have always refused to give his and their claims a definite form, and will not set down at what time he became leader of the Church; by what means he became leader of the Church; under what law he became leader of the Church; or in what office he is leader of the Church.

The consciousness of the utter baldness of his claims, has not only prevented his advocates ever placing them upon any definite foundation, and resting their defense upon that; but it has pre-

vented all the able men in his organization from daring to discuss the question of his authority, just as none of the sects dare discuss the doctrine taught by Latter Day Saints.

As an evidence of this I may mention to you that at Philadelphia, the 30th of August, 1846, I sent a most respectful proposition to Orson Hyde and John Taylor, then preaching in that city, to discuss this question of the authority of the Twelve to lead the church: and such a proposition they answered by a scurrilous piece of Billingsgate, which I shall not copy in this letter, but which you can see in the *Millennial Star*, Vol. viii, p. 94.*

But, though Hyde and Taylor refused to enter into a fair and open discussion, they did get out a scurrilous and false handbill, of which they had ten thousand copies printed, and distributed from door to door in Philadelphia, for the purpose of rendering me infamous among both Saints and Gentiles—a purpose that signally failed.

Going on in the same spirit, and relying on vituperation rather than argu-

ment, when they took charge of the *Millennial Star*, they so filled its pages with slander and falsehood, that in eighty-three successive pages, fourteen are made up of false witness against me.*

Thus all the advocates of Brighamism have refused to submit their pretensions to the test of reason and revelation, and have opposed my calling and Apostleship by slander and falsehood, just as all the sectarian priests opposed that of Joseph. Reasonable men have come to the conclusion that they had similar reasons for doing it; the want of anything else wherewith to oppose me.

I have often been accused of teaching that Joseph had fallen from the faith and the favor of God, because one of the revelations say that if his gift (of revelations) is taken from him, he shall only have power to appoint another in his stead. But this accusation is ill founded; for my appointment is not under that provision of the law, but under the general provision for appointing a successor, whenever he ceased to act in the Prophetic office on earth.†

*The following is the correspondence on the subject, as found in the *Millennial Star*, Vol. viii, p. 94:

Philadelphia, August 30th, 1846.

Messrs. J. TAYLOR AND ORSON HYDE:—Knowing from your public proceedings, as well as otherwise, that you, and others associated with you, claim the right, and are attempting to use the power of dictating all the affairs of the church of Jesus Christ in all the world, not under the direction of the First Presidency thereof, but independently: I suggest to you the propriety of publicly showing by what means you are authorized to act as leaders to said church, and offer to publicly discuss that question with you in this city, or any other proper place that will suit your convenience.

Your answer to this, left at the house of Jacob Gibson, on the N. E. corner of Third and Dock Streets, near the post-office, will receive immediate attention. Yours, Respectfully,

JAMES J. STRANG.

ANSWER TO THE ABOVE.

SIR:—After Lucifer was cut off and thrust down to hell, we have no knowledge that God ever condescended to investigate the subject or right of authority with him.

Your case has been disposed of by the authorities of the church, and being satisfied with our own power and calling, we have no disposition to ask from whence yours came.

Yours, Respectfully,

ORSON HYDE,

JOHN TAYLOR.

See, also, *Gospel Herald*, (Voree,) Vol. i, No. 8.

*A sample of their style of treating the question is found in the following heading of a three and a half page article, from the *Millennial Star*, Vol. viii, p. 123.

SKETCHES OF NOTORIOUS CHARACTERS.

James J. Strang, successor of Sidney Rigdon, Judas Iscariot, Cain & Co. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of His Most Gracious Majesty, Lucifer the L., assisted by his allied cotemporary advisers, John C. Bennett, William Smith, G. J. Adams and John E. Page, Secretaries of Legation.

† It has been a favorite resort of those opposing the prophetic calling of Mr. Strang, saying that if Joseph appointed a successor, he could do nothing further. Thus the following letter from elder Dunn to elder Appleby, from the *Millennial Star*, Vol. viii, p. 93:

New York, Aug. 4th, 1846.

DEAR BROTHER APPLEBY:—I address you a few lines this morning, which may be for your benefit, as I understand that Strangism is making a division in the branch at Philadelphia. I shall state the fact which I am knowing to, as I was presiding over the western part of the State of Michigan at the time J. J. Strang presented himself as a prophet to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, appointed, as he said, by brother Smith. He came to the town of Florence, St. Joseph's County, Michigan, on the 5th of August, 1844, and presented a letter to me purporting to come from brother J. Smith. I read its contents, and saw that it did not correspond

There are numerous revelations in which God charges Joseph with sin, but the end of them all is, that he repented with godly sorrow, and was forgiven.* It is not I who charge him with these sins, but the same God who forgave him was his accuser, and it does not become us to make God a liar, and Joseph a false prophet, in order to say that Joseph knew no sin, of whom God said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

These revelations make a wide distinction between the case of Joseph and that of Eli, who was removed from the Prophetic office, and had no power except to declare the appointment of his successor.

Joseph remained a Prophet in the favor of God till the end of his life; he had full power to do anything which a Prophet may lawfully do. A few days previous to his death, God gave him a revelation appointing me as his successor in the Prophetic office.

This revelation Joseph caused to be written and placed among the confidential archives of the Church at Nauvoo. He also wrote to me a letter repeating the substance of it, and giving

with the Revelation that is in the Book of Covenants, for it says if he (Joseph) "transgresses he shall not have power except to appoint another." And the revelation to J. J. Strang, purporting to come from brother Smith, appointed Strang's counselor and gathering place, etc., which the Book of Covenants said he should not do, for if he transgress he should only have power to appoint, and go no farther. * * *

CRANDELL DUNN.

This letter entirely mistakes Mr. Strang's position. His claim was never that Joseph fell from his priesthood, and therefore had no power except to appoint a successor; but that he was martyred for the witness of Jesus and the word of God, and taken unto God, and therefore through him the keys of mysteries and revelations were given to another; that is, unto him.

But in the other case the words "shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead" seem to have reference only to ordaining; shall have power only to appoint, not to ordain a successor, for the same paragraph goes on to say that the successor shall be ordained in the manner which God had before revealed to Joseph. This was in Feb., 1831. And in the preceding Sept. God had revealed to him the law of ordaining by the hand of angels. D. & C., sec. 1, pp. 2, 3.

* Thus saith the Lord, verily, verily I say unto you my son, thy sins are forgiven thee, according to thy petition, for thy prayers and the prayers of thy brethren have come up into my ears. D. & C., sec. lxxxv, p. 1. (lxxxiv, in the Kirtland edition.—Ed.)

me brief counsel for my calling. This letter reached me at Wisconsin, and its contents became public several days before the first rumor of the martyrdom of the Prophet, or of his arrest.†

† LETTER OF JOSEPH SMITH TO JAMES J. STRANG.

Nauvoo, June 18th, 1844.

MY DEAR SON:—Your epistle of May 24th, proposing the planting a Stake of Zion in Wisconsin and the gathering of the saints there, was duly received, and I with most of the brethren whose advice I called in were of opinion that you was deceived by a spirit not of this world, great but not good. Brother Hyrum however thought otherwise, and favored the project, not doubting it was of God. I however determined to return you an unfavorable answer for the present. But, Oh, the littleness of man in his best earthly state! not so the will of the Almighty. God hath ruled it otherwise, and a message from the throne of grace directed me as it hath inspired you, and the faith which thou hast in the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel, hath been repaid to thee a thousand fold, and thou shalt be like him; but the flock shall find rest with thee, and God shall reveal to thee his will concerning them.

I have long felt that my present work was almost done, and that I should soon be called to rule a mighty host, but something whispers me it will be in the land of spirits, where the wicked cease from troubling and the bands of the prisoner fall off. My heart yearns for my little ones, but I know God will be a father to them, and I can claim face to face the fulfillment of promise from him who is a covenant keeping God, and who sweareth and performeth and faileth not to the uttermost.

The wolves are upon the scent, and I am waiting to be offered up, if such be the will of God, knowing that though my visage be more marred than that of any, it will be unscarred and fair when archangels shall place on my brow the double crown of martyr and king in a heavenly world.

In the midst of darkness and boding danger the spirit of Elijah came upon me, and I went away to inquire of God how the Church should be saved.

I was upon the hill of the Temple. The calm father of waters rolled below changeless and eternal. I beheld a light in the heavens above and streams of bright light illuminated the firmament, varied and beautiful as the rainbow, gentle, yet rapid as the fierce lightning.

The Almighty came from his throne of rest. He clothed himself with light as with a garment. He appeared, and moon and stars went out. The earth dissolved in space. I trod on air, and was borne on wings of Cherubims. The sweetest strains of heavenly music thrilled in my ear, but the notes were low and sad as though they sounded the requiem of martyred Prophets.

I bowed my head to the earth and asked only wisdom and strength for the church. The voice of God answered, My servant Joseph, thou hast been faithful over many things, and thy reward is glorious; the crown and sceptre are thine, and they wait thee. But thou hast sinned in some things, and thy punishment is very bitter. The whirlwind goeth before, and its clouds are dark, but rest followeth, and to its days there shall be no end. Study the words of the vision for it tarrieth not.

And now behold my servant James J. Strang hath come to thee from far for truth when he knew it not, and hath not rejected it, but had faith in thee, the Shepherd and Stone of Israel,

Thus was I called by the revelation of God, and received my appointment through Joseph, according to the revela-

and to him shall the gathering of the people be, for he shall plant a stake of Zion in Wisconsin, and I will establish it; and there shall my people have peace and rest, and shall not be moved, for it shall be established on the prairie on White River, in the lands of Racine and Walworth; and behold my servants James and Aaron shall plant it, for I have given them wisdom, and Daniel shall stand in his lot on the hill beside the river looking down on the prairie, and shall instruct my people, and shall plead with them face to face.

Behold my servant James shall lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of Zion, and my servant Aaron shall be his counselor, for he hath wisdom in the gospel, and understandeth the doctrines, and erreth not therein.

And I will have a house built unto me there of stone, and there will I show myself to my people by my mighty works, and the name of the city shall be called Voree, which is, being interpreted, garden of peace; for there shall my people have peace and rest, and wax fat and pleasant in the presence of their enemies.

But I will again stretch out my arm over the river of waters, and on the banks thereof shall the house of my choice be. But now the city of Voree shall be a stronghold of safety to my people, and they that are faithful and obey me I will there give them great prosperity and such as they have not had before; and unto Voree shall be the gathering of my people, and there shall the oppressed flee for safety, and none shall hurt or molest them.

And by this shall they know that I have spoken it: the people there and the owners of the land shall show kindness to them, for great calamities are coming on the church, and such as have not been, and if they scatter, the ungodly of the world shall swallow them up, but if they gather to my city of Voree there will I keep them under the shadow of my wings; and the cities from whence my people have been driven shall be purged with a high hand, for I will do it, and my people shall be again restored to their possessions; but dark clouds are gathering, for the church is not yet wholly purged.

And now I command my servants, the Apostles and Priests and Elders of the church of the Saints, that they communicate and proclaim this my word to all the Saints of God in all the world, that they may be gathered unto and round about my city of Voree, and be saved from their enemies, for I will have a people to serve me.

And I command my servant Moses Smith that he go unto the saints with whom he is acquainted and unto my people, and command them in my name to go into my city of Voree and gain inheritances therein, and he shall have an inheritance therein, for he hath left all for my sake, and I will add unto him many fold if he is faithful; for he knows the land, and can testify unto them that it is very good.

So spake the Almighty God of heaven. Thy duty is made plain, and if thou lackest wisdom, ask of God, in whose hands I trust thee, and he shall give thee unsparingly; for if evil befall me, thou shalt lead the flock to pleasant pastures. God sustain thee.

JOSPH SMITH.

JAMES J. STRANG.

This letter was received at Burlington by regular course of mail, coming through the distributing office at Chicago, and bears the Nauvoo post-mark of June 19th, the day following its date. It arrived at Burlington July 9th, and was immediately taken from the office by C. P. Barnes, Esq., a distinguished lawyer at that

tions given to him. D. & C. xi., p. 1 and 2, *id. li.*, p. 2.

And at the same moment in which Joseph was slain I was visited by an Angel of God, accompanied by a numerous heavenly train, and anointed and ordained to the Prophetic office, as Moses and Joseph had been before me.*

place, who, in consequence of the rumors of persecution and civil war against the Mormons, and a general anxiety to hear the latest news, immediately carried it to Mr. Strang, with the request to be informed of any news of public interest which it might contain. It therefore became public the same evening. * * *

Mrs. Emma Smith recollects well of her husband receiving a letter from Mr. Strang, and holding a council on the subject, and names Hyrum Smith, Willard Richards and John P. Green as present at that council, and also that a letter was sent to Mr. Strang in answer, but of the import of the answer she was not informed.

Immediately after the martyrdom of Joseph, John Taylor, Willard Richards and William W. Phelps took a kind of temporary direction of the affairs of the church, instructing the saints to wait patiently the hand of the Lord; assuring them that he had not left them without a shepherd, and that all things would be made known in due season. To every question of the saints, Who is the prophet? replies were made, in substance, that the saints would know in due season, but that nothing could be done until the Twelve got home, because the appointment of a prophet and the directions for salvation of the church from the perils they were in, was contained in sealed packages directed to them. Orson Hyde and others of the Twelve, who were then in the east, stated in public congregations in New York, Philadelphia and other cities, that Willard Richards had written to them that the appointment of a prophet was left with him, under seal, to be opened on the return of the Twelve. This assertion was so often made that the whole church were daily expecting to hear a new prophet proclaimed. On the eighth day of August, 1844, when Sidney Rigdon endeavored to obtain authority to lead the church, John P. Green, marshal of the city of Nauvoo, told them, "They need not trouble themselves about it, for Joseph had appointed one James J. Strang, who lived up north, to stand in his stead." The sudden death of John P. Green immediately after this declaration (under very extraordinary circumstances) left Willard Richards and John Taylor sole repositories of all documents on this subject, except this letter.

They had simply to suppress documents in their hands to set themselves up in power, or overthrow themselves and their pretensions by publishing them. These, and many other facts which we have not room to state, make an array of testimony of the strongest kind in favor of this letter. It is worthy of consideration that no one fact has been relied on against it, but that in various quarters different false tales have been told to disparage it, which a mere inspection of the letter or of public records, would prove false. The only reason which can be given for this continual resort to falsehood is, that there is no truth against it.

* FROM THE CHURCH RECORDS.

On the twenty-seventh day of June, 1844, at five and a half o'clock, in the afternoon, James J. Strang was in the Spirit, and the Angel of God came unto him and saluted him, saying:

Fear God and be strengthened and obey him,

So I was called by the voice of God, and sent by the hand of Angels, as were the chief Prophets before me.

Doubtless you will say, "How am I to know these things?" I answer, "Just as you know the same things of Joseph: God has not left me without witnesses."

The first evidence in favor of Joseph was, that he came in fulfillment of the Prophets. At the beginning of his ministry this evidence was not absolutely conclusive, because, the objector an-

for great is the work which he hath required at thy hand. Go on in hope and strength, and falter not, and he will sustain thee and thou shalt triumph, for the voice of the Lord, by the mouth of Joseph, will he fulfill.

And the Angel of the Lord stretched forth his hand unto him and touched his head, and put oil upon him, and said, Grace is poured upon thy lips, and God blesseth thee with the greatness of the Everlasting Priesthood. He putteth might, and glory, and majesty upon thee, and in meekness, and truth, and righteousness will he prosper thee.

Thou shalt save his people from their enemies when there is no arm to deliver, and shall bring salvation when destruction walketh in the house of thy God. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore thy God hath anointed thee with oil, and set thee above all thy fellows.

Thy words shall be like sharp arrows in the hearts of the wicked. Thou shalt rebuke those who pervert the word of thy God. Thou shalt preach righteousness and the sublime mysteries in the ears of many people, and shall bring the gospel to many who have not known it, and to the nations afar off.

Thou shalt drive backward and put to shame those that do evil, and the workers of iniquity shall fall. They shall be cast down, and shall not be able to rise. With purity will the Lord thy God arm thee, and purity and truth shalt thou teach.

Keep the law of the Lord thy God in thy heart, and none of thy steps shall slide. With thee is the fountain of truth. In thy light shall the people of thy God see, for thou shalt speak his word unto them, and from thy lips shall they receive it.

The blessing of thy God shalt thou put upon them, and his curse upon evil doers, if, after being oft rebuked, they repent not; and before my people shalt thou go, to lead them into my ways, for unto thee has the Lord thy God given salvation.

In righteousness shalt thou rule. Thou shalt redeem the poor and the needy from suffering and violence, and to thee God giveth judgment for them. Thou shalt deliver the prey from the spoiler, for God, thy God, hath put them in thy hand.

And in weakness will he make thee strong. Thou shalt rule among his people. Thou shalt break in pieces the rod of the oppressor, and the yoke of the unjust ruler. They shall flee away, but the way of peace they shall not find.

While the day of the wicked abideth shalt thou prepare a refuge for the oppressed, and for the poor and needy. Unto thee shall they come, and their brethren who are scattered shall come with them, and the destruction of the ungodly shall quickly follow, for it already worketh. Go thy way and be strong.

answered, "if it is necessary that a prophet should so arise, how are we to know that Joseph is that Prophet?" No such answer could be made in my case, for I have already shown you that, by the truth of Joseph, when he was taken, another must arise as I did.* And no other one has so arisen.

Another evidence in favor of Joseph was, that he built up a Church on the pattern of the Apostolic Church, which none of the sects, however learned, and however well acquainted with the scriptures, had been able to do. The argument was that as no man can understand the things of God, except by the spirit of God,† so, unless he is inspired by God's spirit, he cannot work by his pattern. But Joseph did work strictly according to the pattern, building up a Church with Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists; the same priesthood, the same orders, and the same mission as that instituted by Jesus Christ; therefore, Joseph is inspired by the Spirit of God.

Now this Church, so built up by Joseph, though it has in it, first, Apostles, secondarily, Prophets, then Evangelists, etc., has a Prophet who is also an Apostle, standing at its head, and at the head of its Apostles, who is not one of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, for Joseph was ordained an Apostle as well as a Prophet. D. & C., xlv.†

Thus there was a precise correspondence in its organization with the Apostolic Church; for in that Jesus Christ stood at the head, a Prophet like unto Moses, (Acts iii,) and also an Apostle and a High Priest, (Heb. iii, 1,) and beside him there was a Quorum of Twelve Apostles, (Matt. x.)

* See post. pp. 2, 3.

† 1 Cor., ii, 14.

† Commandments were given to Joseph Smith, Jr., who was called of God, and ordained an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to be the first elder of this church, and to Oliver Cowdery, who was also called of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to be the second elder of this church, and ordained under his hand. D. & C., sec. ii, p. 1.

And after the death of Jesus, Peter, James and John, in succession, held the same office and the keys of the same ministry, and it was in virtue of that priesthood that they were sent to ordain Joseph.* Had they any less office; had they only been members of the Quorum of the Twelve, upon the principle that the less cannot bless the greater,† they could not have ordained him, for his calling was to a higher priesthood than that of the Twelve.

Accordingly, in the Apostolic Church, as these were taken out of the Quorum of the Twelve, and placed in the Prophetic office, others were made Apostles in their places.‡ And John the Revelator, especially, became more renowned as a Prophet than he had been as an Apostle, and wrote a Book of Prophecies.

Had Brigham Young been acting in the spirit of God, he would have continued to build up the Church after the same pattern. Certainly if any man could understand and build by that pattern, he could. But he did not.§ He put forth his proclamation, declaring that we were to be led by a Prophet no longer, but that henceforth the Twelve were to dictate all the affairs of the Church in all the world, without any power above them on earth.|| (Times and Seasons, Aug. 25, 1844.) And on this pattern he continued to build for some four years; arguing, consistently with his own theory, that the Twelve

were to have no successors; but that after their time the Seventies, or some Quorum, would take the leadership.

That this was all contrary to the Apostolic pattern, it is not necessary now for me to prove to a Brighamite. Young, after working by this pattern some four years, admitted that it was wrong, and got himself elected Prophet, and Richards and Kimball his Counselors, and filled up the three vacant places in the Quorum of the Twelve, and had another man appointed President of the Twelve, in his place.*

How did it happen that when he failed so entirely to follow the law, and work by the pattern, after an Apostolic experience of fourteen years, I, who had been in the Church but little over four months, and had never seen a Book of Doctrine and Covenants, have, from the beginning of my ministry unto this day, without a single deviation or departure, built the house of God by the pattern he has given? The only possible answer is, "I am inspired by the same spirit which guided God's master builders in all the days gone by." This is another of my witnessses.

And you will allow me here to remark that this is a witness which cannot be cross-examined. Brigham Young and myself have put our cases upon record. The patterns by which we have severally been building the Church, and the means by which we claim to have become the master builders, we have both long since published to the world. By our own words shall we be judged.

Another evidence similar in kind to this, in favor of Joseph's Prophetic calling was, that, whereas, all the learned clergy of the various sects failed to preach the doctrine of Christ, as declared in the New Testament, he truly declared the gospel of the resurrection and life everlasting. The reason given for their error was not their want of human learn-

* D. & C., sec. 1, p. 3.

† Heb. vii, 7.

‡ The Brighamites have finally been constrained to make a partial acknowledgement of the correctness of this rule; for, after taking Brigham Young, H. C. Kimball and Willard Richards out of the Quorum of the Twelve, to make a First Presidency of them, Charles C. Rich, Lorenzo Snow and Erastus Snow were made Apostles in their places. This was done at Salt Lake, Feb. 12th, 1850, by a council of the First Presidency, and P. P. Pratt, J. Taylor and Amasa Lyman, of the Twelve.

§ He waited till he was constrained to acknowledge that the Strangites had the better of the argument, and then made a blundering attempt to imitate them.

|| See note (†) post. p. 3.

* See note post, page 6.

ing, but their lack of divine inspiration.

And as Joseph, with a very meager education, successfully declared the true doctrine, and defended it against every opposer, coming off triumphant in every encounter, we claim that the spirit of God must have taught him in each case what to say; and if continually guided by inspiration of God, then called and chosen of God to that ministry in which he inspired him. The force of this argument has brought thousands of converts to the faith.

By this argument Brigham Young and I are to be judged. This is one of God's witnesses, by whom we are to stand or fall. Let it speak upon the baptism for the dead, and the sonship of Christ.

You know very well that Joseph restored the institution of baptism for the dead, and that under his instruction and administration, men were baptized for their fathers, their mothers, their brothers, their sisters, their wives, their sons and their daughters; and women were baptized for their fathers, their mothers, their brothers, their sisters, their husbands, their sons and their daughters, as well as their collateral relatives and friends, male and female, without regard to sex.

Do you remember; I think you must have been present, when at Nauvoo, in the midst of the congregation of the Saints, Brigham Young, with cold and uninspired heart, and apostate words, declared that this was all wrong, and would go for nothing, and they would have to be baptized over or the dead would be lost, because men could not be baptized for women nor women for men. *Times and Seasons, 1845.**

* *Speech delivered by President B. Young, in the City of Joseph (Nauvoo) April 6th, 1845.*

Last Sunday I proposed to the Saints to speak to-day on the subject of the baptism for the dead in connection with other items, that the Saints may be satisfied—that all doubt and darkness may be removed with regard to certain principles of the doctrine of redemption.

But before I undertake to explain or give correct views upon this important subject, I would say, to all those who are satisfied with all the

This may be a sufficient honoring of Joseph according to Brigham's idea of it, but with us the rule is, let Joseph be true though all the earth are liars. We hold him a Prophet, speaking by authority, whose voice is as the voice of God. By his teaching we measure the doctrine of others.

By Joseph's teaching and Joseph's example we have measured Brigham Young's doctrine of baptism for the dead, and found it wanting. We have tried him by God's words, which he gave to Joseph, and found him false. We have adhered to Joseph's rule, being guided and inspired by the same spirit.

Joseph taught that Jesus Christ was the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of

knowledge they have, and want no more; but for those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, I pray they may be filled and satisfied with the intelligence of God, even his glory.

What I have stated in the winter past relative to the baptism for the dead, has been a matter of discussion among the elders, and among the brethren and sisters in general, but I will endeavor to show to this congregation of Saints the propriety of it; and that the people could not run at haphazard, and without order to attend to this ordinance and at the same time it be valid, and recognized in heaven. * * *

Joseph in his life time did not receive every thing connected with the doctrine of redemption. * * *

I have said that a man cannot be baptized for a woman, nor a woman for man, and it be valid. I have not used any argument as yet; I want now to use an argument upon this subject, it is a very short one; and I will do it by asking this congregation, if God would call a person to commence a thing that would not have power and ability to carry out? Would he do it? (No.) Well then, what has been our course on former occasions? Why, here goes our beloved sisters, and they are baptized in the river or in the fount for their uncles, for their fathers, for their grandfathers and great grandfathers.

Well, now I will take you and confirm you for your uncles, for your fathers, for your grandfathers, and let you go; after a while here comes our beloved sisters, saying, I want to be ordained for my uncle, and for my father, and for my grandfather, and for my great grandfather; I want my father ordained to the high priesthood, and my grandfather, I want to be patriarch, and you may ordain me a prophet for my uncle! What would you think of all that, sisters, come now, you have been baptized and confirmed for your father, wont you be ordained for him? You could cast on a stocking and finish it. You could take wool and card and spin it and make it into cloth and then make it into garments. A person that commences a work and has not ability and power to finish it, only leaves the unfinished remains as a monument of folly. We will not commence a work we cannot finish; but let us hearken to the voice of the spirit and give heed to his teachings and we will make ourselves perfect in all things, —*Times and Seasons, Vol. vi, pp. 353, 355.*

Judah, and of the house and lineage of David, after the flesh, according to the Scriptures; and as such was the lawful king of Israel, and the right heir to the throne of David; and that he was a Son of God by the priesthood, after the power of an endless life; the first born son, as the first fruit from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth, by his priestly calling, and the appointment of the Almighty.

In pursuance of this doctrine, Joseph taught that he himself was a Prophet like unto Moses; as Jesus Christ was; and a son of God in the same sense in which he was; (see Book of Mormon, 2d Nephi, ii.;) and that all who kept the law of the gospel faithfully and intelligently should also become sons of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ, and kings in that kingdom which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

He offered to the faithful as the recompense of their services, not like the sectarians, a policy of insurance against hell-fire, but like prophets and apostles of old, the likeness and wisdom, and power and majesty of him who is eternal.

This doctrine of the sonship of Jesus Christ, and of all who by their priesthood are declared to be the sons of God, and of their glorious reward, I have illustrated and defended in two hundred sermons, and in a book which has been the end of controversy upon the subject, against Protestants and Romanists, Christians, Jews, Pagans, Infidels and Apostate Mormons of every sect, schism and stamp, from Brighamites down to Gurleyites; carrying out in its bearing and results that great truth, first declared in this generation by Joseph Smith, that by keeping the whole law of God, and being faithful in the work of Christ, to the end, we become perfect, as our Father in Heaven is perfect, possessed of the prerogatives of Deity.

Guided by the same divine light which illuminated Joseph's pathway in life, and

guided his footsteps in his outgoings and incomings, in defense of these great truths, I have pursued the demi-godism of apostate christianity to its origin in heathen mythology; have convicted the Emperor Constantine, a heathen prince, of forcing this dogma on the Christian Church with fire and sword, while he corrupted the priesthood with bribes and the spoils of heathen temples, and have detected in the only passage of scripture which seems to support it, a forgery of the fourth century.

While I have been thus illustrating, propagating and defending the doctrine taught by both Christ and Joseph, Brigham Young, guided by abundance of tact and no inspiration, seized upon the traditions and prejudice of Protestant education, which nearly all the Saints received, and from which few were quite divested, revived among the Saints the myth of demi-godism, leading them back to the vain mysteries of Paganism and Apostate Christianity; adopted the Trinitarianism of Saint Athanasius, the Nicene Council, and the Emperor Constantine.

Thus declaring Jesus Christ the Son of God, without any regard to his priesthood, by an assumed liason of the Almighty with the pretty wife of a carpenter, he was driven to account for the sonship of Joseph in some way or get rid of the question as he has of a hundred others, which could not be answered without acknowledging his imposture.

The attempt was made, in an irresponsible and semi-official manner, to establish the ridiculous dogma that Joseph was the Holy Ghost incarnate; as though that blessed spirit by which and through which God inspires us with all divine knowledge, and the love of godliness, could dwell in a body defiled by sin.

And, as Pagans and Apostate Christians, in order to establish the demi-godship of Jesus Christ, had to charge him of being a bastard, and his mother with

a sin which would justify her husband in putting her away. I suppose these Brighamite teachers, who tried in vain to establish this miserable dogma, were prepared to charge the mother of the prophet with lending her charms in defiled sheets, and the Almighty with being her seducer.

This doctrine of sonship and heirship of God, is another of my witnesses, which testifies continually in all courts and places that I am guided in all my ministry by the inspiration and truth of the Eternal, and that in his ministry Brigham is destitute of that spirit which guided David, Isaiah, Peter, Paul and Joseph.

Pursuing this examination no further, I will call a witness on the discipline and manners of the people of God. I believe Jesus Christ taught that, except for adultery, it was unlawful for a man to put away his wife.* So I teach, and the rule is enforced wherever my authority is acknowledged.

How is it under Brigham's administration? Are not men allowed to put away their wives for any cause, and for none at all? Does not Brigham seal and unseal so freely that marriages become a mere partnership at will?

Moses and the prophets taught that on a man's death, leaving a widow and no sons, his brother should take his widow and raise up seed to his deceased brother, and both Old and New Testament show the prevailing custom to have been that widows went to the near kinsman of their deceased husbands. At the same time conquering kings and successful usurpers took the wives and concubines of conquered kings, and the widows of slaughtered potentates.

Under this rule we are all compelled to acknowledge that Brigham has acted consistently, but not as a Saint, guided by inspiration of God; for then he would have left the widows of Joseph and

Hyrum Smith to their nearest kinsman, their surviving brothers, William and Samuel. He acted precisely like a successful usurper, as David's rebellious son did; he took the widows of the martyred to himself, and held them as the evidence of his successful usurpation; proof conclusive that he is not guided by inspiration of the same spirit by which the scriptures were written.

This subject might be pursued till it filled ponderous tomes, with the same result. While I have constantly adhered to Joseph's teachings, and been advancing to the grasping of new truths in the same direction, Brigham has ignored the necessity of a Prophet in the Church; deprecated all new revelations, till all had been accomplished which was spoken by Joseph; undertook to lead the Church in his own wisdom, and filled up his leisure hours with sermons on the errors of Joseph.

In the ecclesiastical administration another class of witnesses rise like teeming flocks of locusts, to bear testimony that Brigham Young is a schismatic and an usurper, and that I am teaching the same truths, and guided by the inspiration of the spirit as Joseph was.

One of these witnesses, Joseph Smith, charges the Twelve that they exalt not themselves, nor rebel against the First Presidency, and admonishes them, see to it that ye trouble not yourselves about the affairs of the Church at the place of gathering; but take up your cross, and whither the First Presidency send you, go ye; purify your hearts, and go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, who have not received it.—D. & C., civ.

This witness, with all the rest approves me as one sent of God, because I teach the same things; and how should I understand, unless guided by the same spirit of God, without which no man can understand the things of God. In like manner it disapproves of Brigham; because as President of the Twelve he

* Matt. xix, 4 to 9 inclusive,

meddled continually with the affairs of the Church at the place of gathering, and refused "to act under the direction of the Presidency, agreeable to the institution of heaven." D. & C., iii, 12.

There is a single additional evidence which I wish to bring before I leave this branch of the subject. In the revelation given for the establishment of the saints at Nauvoo, (D. & C., p. 13,) God says: "If my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants, whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily, I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place."

Such is the oath of God, upon the faith of which the Saints assembled at Nauvoo. Joseph led them till his death, and they were not removed. After his death the Twelve led them, and they were removed. Yet Heber C. Kimball and others of the Twelve, bore public testimony at the April Conference, 1845, and frequently afterwards, that they were the most obedient people that ever existed.* In the name of truth, tell me sister, why were they removed? Was it not because they followed the wrong leaders? Is not the reason given in the language of God, which follows immediately after? "But if they will not hearken to my voice, nor to the voice of those men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest." Does not this witness prove strong as the oath of God, that in following Brigham Young and the Twelve they followed *leaders* whom God had not appointed? And as I am truly the only alternate, does it not prove by the same oath that I am the leader appointed by God, whom they at Nauvoo refused to follow?

A short time after receiving my prophetic calling, sister Louisa Sanger addressed me a letter in which she made a

demand upon me similar to that contained in your letter. In my reply, guided by the spirit of truth, by which this revelation was given, though it had not been published, I predicted their expulsion as the consequence of following the wrong leaders. She showed this letter to H. C. Kimball and Orson Pratt, and begged them to reply to my *strong reasons*, if any answer could be made. They declined that task, as they always will; but they threw my letter on the floor, and danced on it their defiance of the prediction. Two years did not pass around till the prediction was fulfilled, and thus another witness testified that I was a Prophet inspired of God, and that they were blind and uninspired. By their own words, as well as by the voice of God, were they condemned, and I sustained.

It is not an agreeable task for a prophet to compare prophecy with history, for the purpose of proving that he has not spoken one word more or less than the Lord has spoken by him; and I shall not, without a special occasion, undertake it, for myself. But, whenever the occasion does arise, it will find me fully prepared to show that every leading and material fact in the history of the Brighamite party, for the ten years of its existence, has been by me distinctly and publicly predicted, before it was spoken of among them, and that in all their misfortunes I have offered them such relief as subsequent experience has shown would have been sufficient. So far as this proves me a true prophet, I am entitled to the benefit of the testimony.

As it is natural for Charlatans to ever busy themselves with predicting evil on all who are in their way, Brigham and the host of elders with which he has flooded the country, have, from the beginning of my ministry, poured out a perfect deluge of predictions of dire calamities upon me, and my speedy downfall.

* I am not speaking these things because I see a neglect. I do not see it; but I know there is a good feeling among this people. This people are willing to do anything under heaven they are counseled to do. There never was a more obedient people on the face of the earth.—*Times and Seasons*, Vol. vi, p. 987.

That all these are false predictions, every line of my history is proof. The race between me and them has been like that between David and the house of Saul, and now it needs no prophet to open the eyes of the blindest to the fact that it will have a similar end. Whatever else may happen, nothing can now be plainer than that all the present plans of Brigham, if indeed he has any plans, are destined to total failure.

In weighing the force of these facts it is but just to remember that Brigham and the hosts who followed him, as often as they spoke evil of me, put in requisition a thousand hostile hands to make their predictions prophetic. And yet, every one has fallen to the ground. Not once have they succeeded in making an ill word true. Their hostility I have never reciprocated, but have returned them good for evil; and if obedience to a divine commandment proves anything, this is another witness in my favor.

These, dear sister, are all godly witnesses. They are witnesses who cannot bear false witness, for they speak the word of God. Though I have called up but one or two in each class, and there are from a score to hundreds in each class, yet here is a cloud of witnesses, all bearing testimony that I am guided in my ministry by the spirit of God, and that Brigham Young has departed from godliness to fables.

Doubtless some, on reading so far will reply: All this does not prove a call by the voice of God, and an ordination by the hand of angels. Such a reply is not argument. It has no logic in it. It is mere captiousness. For when it is shown that I am really and truly a prophet of God, endowed with the gifts and blessings of the prophetic office, that is satisfactory and conclusive evidence of the divine call and a legal sending, which I lay claim to.

Moreover that proof entitles me to full credit, when I say further, and especially that I have heard the voice of God and

received the visitation of angels, that God has called me to such an office by his own voice, and ordained me to it by the hand and anointing of the most noble in the angelic hosts.

Neither by Mormons, Christians, or Jews, can such testimony ever be rejected, without rejecting their faith and going over to infidelity.

Joseph alone bore witness of the time, circumstances and manner of his prophetic call. Joseph and Oliver were the sole witnesses of his angelic ordination. If it be said that I am an interested witness, equally are they both; for each of them, in proving the ordination of the other, proved also his own.

The fact that Jesus Christ has received all power in heaven and on earth rests upon his testimony alone, and the transfiguration is proved only by a few devoted friends, who received with him part in the same ministry. The credibility of all this testimony depends on the fact that they are shown otherwise to be in possession of the prophetic gifts.

Moses is the only witness that the angel appeared unto him in the burning bush, and that God spoke to him out of the midst of the flame. Yet all the earth cannot discredit his testimony; for God, in making him a prophet, has indorsed him as a true witness of visions and revelations.

Going from these primary to secondary cases, Noah is the only witness that God revealed to him the approaching deluge. His work depending on that revelation, and the coming of the flood, have proved the truth of testimony more satisfactorily than the word of ten thousand witnesses.

When Elijah was taken up to heaven, and his mantle fell upon Elisha, Elisha was the sole witness of his induction into the prophetic office. He was entitled to be credited in his testimony, because he did the works of a prophet, and because it was necessary that some one should rise to fill the office, and come in, in a legal

manner, and he alone *claimed* to have come in, in that manner. His case was just parallel to mine in that respect. He was the only witness of the circumstance, time and manner in which he became a prophet, yet to deny his prophetic calling was to deny the legitimate continuance of the work of God in the dispensation. And, in my case at least, if not in Elisha's, to deny my calling is to deny the dispensation altogether.

Joseph, the son of Jacob, before he was sold into Egypt, had certain visions, showing his future dignity among his brethren. From the divine record it does not even appear that there was any necessity of his being so called, apparent by the previous revelations. His visions were attested by his word alone. Yet for all this, his brethren fell under condemnation for not receiving his word.

The promise which God made to Abraham, to give him an everlasting possession, and the covenant of life, in which he swore, that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed, were known to that generation by Abraham's word alone. Indeed, the lapse of ages has scarcely added a witness in five hundred years. And the covenant by which the house of David were established as the royal seed, and a perpetual dynasty before God, until the time of Isaiah, stood upon the testimony of David alone.

In these cases I do not think the rule is established that, as often as any man claims the prophetic office, he should be received in it, on his own word only. So far from it, the first requisite in sustaining his claim is, that it be in conformity to the known and declared law.

Upon this requisite Brigham fails, and that is a full end of his claims. Upon the same test, I am sustained. If there were two or more who claimed in the same manner, it would not then become a question of veracity between them, which was truly called of God, and which were impostors.

The question then would be, which is

possessed of the gifts pertaining to the prophetic office. Whoever was found possessed of those gifts, and accomplishing the work of a prophet, *according* to the law of God, would thereby be recognized by God himself as a true prophet and his true witness. These are the public credentials of Almighty God, that such an one is a true and faithful witness of visions and revelations. So that the prophets, in declaring the time, circumstance and manner of their callings, are not making a pleading statement, to be proved by witnesses. They are God's witnesses, approved by him, and sent to bear witness of his word among men. To attempt to impeach them, is to attempt to impeach the God who sent them.

At this place it is proper for me to notice a statement made by Harvey Green, and industriously circulated by the Brighamites to the effect that at the conference at Florence, Michigan, August 5th, 1844, he inquired of me if I had been ordained by an angel, urging upon me that it was necessary, and pointing out to me the revelation, (D. & C. l. pp. 2, 3,) showing the necessity, and that I confessed that I had not been so ordained.

The only truth contained in this statement is, that we conversed on the subject. Mr. Harvey Green did not inquire if I had been ordained by an angel. He did not urge upon me the necessity of such an ordination. He did not point out or mention the revelation showing that necessity, and I did not know of its existence till several months later; and I did not tell him that I had not been so ordained.

Knowing that there was no witness to our conversation, he has maliciously and willfully borne false witness against me before God, in the congregation of the Saints and unto all the earth, evidently calculating that it would be but my word against his, and that he would be believed among his own friends, as well as I among mine.

In this expectation he will be disappointed, and his name will go down to succeeding generations in all time as a false witness against the Lord's anointed.

First of all, then, on the same day on which Joseph was slain, it became known in the family in which I boarded near Burlington, Wisconsin, that I had had a wonderful vision, in which I was visited by a numerous host of angels, with one of whom I had had a conversation of great importance, or that I so asserted, and the next day the matter was public in the neighborhood.

Now it is not probable nor in any sense believable that a man respectable in one of the learned professions as I was, among friends who had known him from childhood, and with whom he was likely to be associated for life, most of whom were disbelievers of divine revelation, should tell a tale of that kind to set the whole community a laughing at him, and then at that very moment that that fact became necessary in justifying his claim to the highest calling which God confers on man, deny it.

Going from Voree to Florence to attend that conference, I traveled on foot some three hundred miles, stopping nearly every night with the scattered brethren on the route, and communicating this fact to them all as I went. It is hardly probable that after stating it to twenty families, for no other reason than to communicate to others what God had revealed to me, I should deny the same thing the very first moment that the assertion of it became necessary to my defence. And these facts are so publicly known, that to deny them would be as unblushing as to deny the public history of the nation.

Moreover, the public records of the Church at Voree, made previous to my starting to the Conference at Florence, and always before the public from that time to this, contain a full account of that ordination, and a record of the words which the angel spoke. Since

that time down till this day, a period of above ten years, I have constantly declared my ordination by the hands of an angel, and have so preached in all the principal cities in eighteen States.

Is it not asking too much of human credulity, to ask mankind to believe that just once in the midst of all this, in the presence of a *single* witness, and that an enemy, I denied all this? Believe it, if you can. Men of sense never will. To believe it, it is necessary to believe not only that I am a liar and an impostor, but more than idiot.

But I will not rest the impeachment of Mr. Harvey Green on these facts alone, conclusive as they are. He is self-impeached. He, a Brighamite, could not urge upon anyone the necessity of being ordained by the hand of an angel, for Brigham does not claim any such ordination, and confessing the necessity acknowledges him an impostor.

This is one of those miserable blunders by which false witnesses earmark their falsehood. How much more like truth his testimony would sound, if he should say that I claimed an angelic ordination, as I always did, both before and since, and that he disputed the necessity of it, as Brighamites always do, and that I, being unacquainted with the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, could show no law or precedent for it.

To get an opportunity to contradict me in the premises, he assumes to place me, just for that one moment in opposition to all my previous and subsequent ministry; and then, in contradicting me, throws himself in deadly opposition to Brighamism, and to his whole subsequent life. There I will leave him. Soon will be with him others, who have borne false witness against me.

Crandall Dunn, who was also at that conference, in a letter to Mr. Appleby, dated *two years* afterward, accuses me of claiming the prophetic office at first by virtue of the appointment alone, and subsequently taking *another position*,

and claiming it by the angelic ordination alone. (*Millennial Star*, 1846, Vol. viii, p. 93).*

*ELDER DUNN'S LETTER.

New York, August 4th, 1846.

DEAR BROTHER APPELBY— * * * And, furthermore, Strang's revelation commands the apostles, through J. Smith, to proclaim this my doctrine abroad—the gathering at Voree, in Wisconsin. I asked Mr. Strang if the twelve were the apostles? Yes, he said, they were. I asked him if they knew anything about this revelation? He said they did not. I then asked him if he had been ordained a prophet? He replied he had not. I then asked him how he was going to receive an ordination? He replied he did not know. I then said to him, if you have not been ordained, you have no authority to act as a prophet, no more than a justice of the peace has before he has been authorized, although he has been elected by the people. He acknowledged to me he had no authority to act as a prophet, and said he must receive an ordination by those who held the authority, and agreed not to say any more about the gathering at Voree until the revelation was sanctioned by the twelve, and that he would return home. But he knew very well that he would not meet with good success at Nauvoo with his letter, and refused to obey counsel after he had agreed to. I then called a conference, and after hearing his side of the question, I arose and told him what I was charged to do.

If any elder came along with revelation, or taught doctrine contrary to the Bible, Book of Covenants, and Book of Mormon, to counsel them to return home; and you said you would do it, but you have caught yourself, seeing you have refused to do so. I then told him that they had two letter stamps at the postoffice in Nauvoo, or else his was a forged one, as I had three letters from the office about the same time his was mailed, which gave me a few chances to test his. His was stamped with black ink, and the letters (or type) were one size larger than the three which I had, and they were stamped with red ink. I called him to the stand; he saw the difference, and his head dropped as if he had been knocked down. I then demanded his license, but he had none to give, for he had never received any. I sent the proceedings of the meeting to Nauvoo, informing them that he was cut off from the church, and it was published. And no more of Strangism was heard of until last fall.

He, knowing the movement of the church, and the persecution, took another position, and said he was ordained by an angel at the time brother Joseph was killed, and he has caught some of the uneasy spirits to follow him, and by their little cunning have deceived some honest ones. His last position is no better than the first, for he admits Joseph holds the keys of the kingdom in this world, and in the world to come.

Well, how did brother Joseph get the keys conferred upon him? By Peter, James and John, because they held them last on the earth. Well, if Joseph had the keys conferred upon him by Peter, James and John, and he (Strang) admits that Joseph holds them in the world to come, I ask how can Strang get the keys, or receive them from any other personage? He cannot, no more than Joseph could, from any other than Peter, James and John, for they held that authority. And I would say to all the saints who have not heard of the foundation of Strangism, that the above is verily true, and as a servant of God, my prayer is that you may not be deceived by him, for he can no more live than a limb of an oak tree when severed from the body. I do not write this to you as instructing you in the order of God, but to inform you of the course Strang took,

I commend to you the reading of that letter in which Mr. Dunn complacently congratulates himself on having won a victory over me, in an encounter of logic, by showing that, though I had been duly *appointed* prophet, I could no more act in that calling than a justice of the peace can act in his office after being elected, until he is commissioned and has taken the oath of office.

Not unfrequently have I seen a blundering logician brought up by his own argument, which, like a two-edged sword, cuts both ways. Dunn's case is worse. If, by this argument, he had shown that I was no prophet, what does he show of Brigham, who does not pretend to have been appointed or ordained?

Dunn's logic is good. Orson Hyde and John Taylor, by the pains they have taken to publish it, have indorsed it. He has shown that a prophet must be both appointed and ordained, or he is no prophet. I am the only one that pretends to an ordination. If I have been ordained, Dunn is a false witness. If I have not, the words of God to Joseph, "I have given to Joseph the keys of the mysteries and revelations which are sealed, until I shall appoint unto them another in his stead," (D. & C., li, p. 2,) has fallen to the ground, and Joseph is a false witness of God, when he gives as the word of God, "and this ye shall know assuredly, that there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations, until Joseph be taken, if he abide in God." (D. & C., xiv, p. 1.)

This last text binds the Almighty to his people, not only that he will send no other to teach by revelation and commandment while Joseph remains, but it binds him also to appoint another in his stead, whenever Joseph was taken, or, failed to abide in God.

So Dunn's argument, though not a

that you, by the spirit of God, may be able to put down every false spirit. I remain, your brother in Christ,
—MILLENIAL STAR, Vol. viii, p. 93.

two-edged sword, is held with the edge the wrong way and cuts home. Joseph has been taken. If I have not been appointed according to my claim, no one has been appointed in fulfillment of this law, for no other one pretends it. Let Joseph be true, though Dunn be a liar. We will lay him away among false witnesses, by the side of Harvey Green.

But, though done with him as a witness, I am not done with his argument. In the same letter he embodies an argument common to the Brighamites.

The argument is, that I could not receive the keys of the kingdom from Joseph, because he holds them in the world to come; and thus I could not receive them from an angel, because last on earth before Joseph, they were held by Peter, James and John, and they gave them to Joseph, who alone holds them forever.

All the force of this argument is in the false assumption that no one can impart the keys of the kingdom without divesting himself of them; and that but one can hold them at a time. The falsity of the assumption is apparent in the fact that Peter, James and John were all possessed of the keys when they conferred them on Joseph.

Jesus Christ conferred the keys of the kingdom on Peter. By this Brighamite argument, though he is king of kings, and the prince of the kings of the earth, and has all power in heaven and on earth, he has not the keys of the kingdom. By the same rule of reasoning, as John held them subsequent to Peter and James, they had no business with them, and no power to confer them on Joseph, and their assuming to do so was a false pretense. Thus the Brighamites, not having the same spirit by which Joseph was guided, make his revelations folly, in order to forge an argument against me.

And that they may succeed by means of so flimsy pretences, they have a custom of darkening counsel by words, without

knowledge, in which the keys of the kingdom, and the keys of mysteries and revelations are referred to, as though they were one and the same thing.

Now the keys of the kingdom represent the power in its several degrees, belonging to those who attain to a Royal Priesthood on earth, which, if faithfully used, ever survives and is exercised in the resurrection and everlasting life, and may be held by ten or ten thousand each in his several rank or place.

But the keys of mysteries and revelations represent that power by which a prophet and seer on earth obtains from God commandments and revelations, and knowledge of mysteries to communicate unto men. It therefore cannot survive this life, for in another state of existence it has no office work to perform.

Starting with this position, it is easy to see how Joseph may appoint a successor to hold the keys of mysteries and revelations, and yet himself, as well as the worthies before and after him, hold the keys of the kingdom in this world and also in the world to come.

Near the close of this letter, which you will perceive is dated August 4th, 1846, you will observe the following prophecy on me: "Strang can no more live than a limb of an old oak tree when severed from the body." Eight years have elapsed since this prophecy was spoken. If it meant that what they call Strangism would die like a limb, cut from an old oak, this particular oak limb has a wonderful tenacity of life, and shows a good promise of becoming a gigantic old oak before it dies.*

*So far from having perished, this church, presided over by Mr. Strang, which Mr. Dunn says "can no more live than a limb of an oak tree when severed from the body," has been constantly strengthening, and is now nearly equal to that presided over by Brigham Young.

At the time Dunn gave this prophecy the gathering under Mr. Strang's Presidency consisted only of one small settlement at Voree, numbering about one thousand, of whom not one third were well established in faith.

Now (1854) they occupy and have the exclusive control of the counties of Manitowish and Emmet, and the township of Drummond, in Chippewa

If the prediction is to be understood in the literal sense, probably Moses Martin, who met me in a dark alley in New York, a few days after the writing of Dunn's letter, and did not accomplish the work of fulfilling prophecy, can tell why it is that the prophet Crandell's words have fallen to the ground. I always attributed it to the fact that Crandell was not called of God to speak by revelation, and more especially that God cares for his own.

Returning to this subject of ordaining by angels, though Orson Hyde and John Taylor, as well as all other Brighamites, have refused to enter into a fair and open discussion with me on this question of authority, they were ready enough to take it up and discuss it when there was none to reply.

Accordingly they have given in the *Millennial Star* (1846, pp. 138, 139) what they call "Joseph Smith's testimony concerning men being ordained by angels," given on the trial of Gladden Bishop. This is not, however, Joseph's own testimony, but appears on its face to be somebody's report of it. It is therefore only hearsay, and anonymous at that, for the author has not signed it. I have no doubt anonymous hearsay enough can be manufactured to order, to condemn me at any time.

The case of Bishop was this: He had been duly ordained an Elder, and while out on a mission set up for a High Priest, claiming to have been ordained by an angel. Joseph called him back and condemned him, on the ground that if God designed him for the High Priesthood he would reveal his call to the living priesthood on earth, and a living High Priest would ordain him.

I submit to every man who knows any-

thing of the matter, that this was all that was decided in the premises. There was nothing else to decide. In trying to force something else out of Joseph's words, he is placed on false grounds, and in opposition to old and new revelations.

Joseph's doctrine, and the doctrine of all the prophets, is, that a particular priesthood, order and mission being instituted, and acting on earth, God will not send his angels to ordain to the same calling, or to any calling inferior and subject to it, because in each of these cases, the living priesthood can ordain.

But to say that on any one being called to a superior priesthood, order or mission, the living priesthood shall ordain, is to say that the less shall bless the greater.

There being High Priests and Apostles, either of which could have ordained Bishop to the High Priesthood, it would be contrary to the order of God to send an angel to ordain him. There was no occasion for it. The living priesthood could do it. I submit that the decision in Bishop's case went no further than this.

But High Priests or Apostles could not have ordained me, or Brigham Young, or any body else to the prophetic office; for that would be the less blessing the greater; it would be raising the stream above the fountain from which it flowed; it would be conferring an authority which they did not possess; and how can they give what they have not? How can they bestow what they possess not?

Moses was a Priest and a Judge when he fled from the face of Pharaoh (Ex. ii, 14,*), and Jethro, to whom he fled for refuge, was also a Priest (Id. 16 iii, 1), and continued so entirely in favor of God that after Moses had led Israel out of Egypt, Moses took counsel from him, and was guided by his advice in some of

county, Michigan, with a population equal to one-third that of Utah.

Considering that when Dunn wrote they were more than fifty to our one, and now, after nine years are but two to our one, the prospect is that Dunn's oak will die while his severed limb is becoming a gigantic old oak,

* The same word is translated interchangeably, either Priest or Prince, here and in several books of the Bible. You will see it so in the marginal readings,

the most important works of his ministry. (Ex. xviii.)

But notwithstanding Jethro was a living priest on earth, approved of God, and so near at hand that he had Moses in his employ as a sheep-keeper and living in his house as a son-in-law, when God called Moses to a higher priesthood than Jethro held, Moses was ordained by the hand of an angel; for Saint Stephen expressly says: "This Moses, whom they refused, saying, who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send, a ruler and a deliverer BY THE HAND OF THE ANGEL, which appeared to him in the bush." Acts vii, 35.

So in endeavoring to make Joseph antagonistic to me, this anonymous writer has made him antagonistic to a great principle in the law of the priesthood, and set his testimony against Moses and Stephen, and the Almighty.

Against all such assaults Joseph has vindicated himself in that revelation where God says: "Verily, I say unto you, that he that is ordained of me, shall come in at the gate, and be ordained as I have told you before." (D & C. xiv., p. 2.) For this was revealed in February, 1831, and only five months before, in September, 1830, God said to Joseph: "I have sent unto you Peter, James and John (angels), by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles, and especial witnesses of my name, and bear the keys of your ministry; and of the same things which I have revealed unto thee; unto whom I have committed the keys of my kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last times, and for the fullness of times, in the which I will gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." (D. & C. l., p. 2.)

This being Joseph's rule, and God's rule, it would seem we ought to be content with it, without making objections. But lest you should ask why Joseph, being a prophet on earth, exercising his authority and office, could not ordain his

successor? I answer, until Joseph was taken there was no room for a successor; and after he was taken, he was not a prophet on earth. If any one had been ordained to the succession in Joseph's life time, he would have received the keys of mysteries and revelations, *in presenti*, which is contrary to that revelation which says: "There is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations, until he be taken, if he abide in me." (D. & C. xiv, p. 1.)

Upon this point the scriptures afford us a strong example, in the case of Elijah and Elisha. It was already known that Elijah was about to be removed from the earth, and Elisha asked for a double portion of his spirit; that is, he asked that whereas he had so far been a counselor and an assistant to him, he might after be established a prophet in his stead. (2d Kings, ii, 9.)

Elijah answered, "Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." (Id. 10.)

Why was this a hard or difficult thing? Because the prophet's successor cannot be ordained while he remains in office, but only after he has been taken unto God, or rejected.

Why was it possible that it should be so if Elisha was present at the translation of Elijah from his earthly mission, to a heavenly? Because, then, Elijah, not dying, but being translated, was capable, the moment he was removed from earth, of acting in his heavenly mission, and could do whatever an angel could do.

The moment Elijah entered the chariot of the Lord, his prophetic office on earth was vacant; at the same moment he commenced his heavenly mission, and without entering into any question as to the manner in which he was ordained, it is very clear that he had to be there at the very time, in order to receive the succession; and that he was there, and did become prophet instead of Elijah,

Some have imagined that he received the prophetic office in Elijah's mantle. But I think that the gifts of God are not contained in garments of wool or flax, and have no doubt he became a prophet by regular appointment and ordination, according to the law of God.

Zacharias was a priest, so much approved of God that he gave revelations to him at the time of Christ's birth. John the Baptist was approved of God as a most faithful priest of the Aaronic order, engaged successfully in a most glorious mission; and several of John's disciples must have been ordained to the priesthood, for they also were baptizing.

Yet by none of these was Jesus ordained a prophet, like unto Moses. The dogma had not then been invented that God could not send an angel to ordain to the superior, because the inferior priesthood was on earth.

Jesus Christ was called by him whose voice said unto him, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased,"—"hear him," (Matt. iii, 17; Mark, i, 11; *Id.* ix, 7; Luke, iii, 22;) and was ordained by that messenger from heaven, who came down at the time of his baptism on no other message.

I am aware that Brighamism is prepared, by its doctrine of demigodism, to deny that Christ was ordained at all; but his very name, *Christ*, signifies anointed, the anointing being a part of the form of the ordination, in reference to which that name was given to him.

Paul devoted most of his epistle to the Hebrews to the subject of the priesthood of Christ, showing that he gloried not himself to be made an High Priest, but that God appointed him to it; and that all his power and glory was conferred on him by the Almighty as his reward for loving righteousness and hating iniquity, after he withstood the severest temptations of this life and remained sinless. (Heb. i, 8, 9.)

I submit that this is most satisfactory evidence that, in the case of Joseph's

successor, the only possible mode in which he could be inducted into office was an angelic ordination, and they that contend against it contend against the institution of heaven. It is hardly necessary for me to add that I am the only one on earth who pretends to such an ordination.

Having thus disposed of the objections to an ordination by angels, and to the evidence of it, I will notice the objections to the evidence of my appointment.

Among these the first is, that if his gift was taken from him, Joseph should only have power to appoint another in his stead. (D. & C. xiv. p. 2.) True, but in case he was taken there was no such limitation on his power. In that case, he retained all the gifts and prerogatives of a prophet till the end of his life, and could as well appoint a counselor and a place of gathering as a prophet. (D. & C. li, p. 2.)

About ten years before his death, Joseph was sealed up to everlasting life; and the danger of being rejected of God, and cast off, did not hang over him. (D. & C. lxxxv, p. 2.) And the revelation containing my appointment, assures him a glorious reward, an everlasting dominion in God's kingdom, for his faithfulness in his ministry, though he had sinned in some things, for which he suffered sore punishment. I know Brighamites who have, unwittingly, perhaps, done more to blacken the memory of Joseph than all the Gentiles on earth, are apt to start up with indignation at the suggestion that Joseph ever sinned.

I only reply, that a dozen or score of revelations given through Joseph, declare him a sinner. And we will acknowledge all his revelations true, be the consequences to him or others what they may.

So Joseph, not having been rejected of God, nor removed out of his place, held full power to the end of his life, to write and teach by way of commandment any revelation which God gave, whether

appointing a successor, a counselor, a place of gathering, or anything else that God might appoint.

But your sister has shown me the letter of Norton Jacobs, accompanying yours, attacking the genuineness of that letter. Attacks of that kind have been made for eight years past, which have always been fully answered as often as heard of. I propose now to review them, and lay by the false witnesses, to be taken to their own place.

Mr. Jacob's first allegation is, that the postmark on my letter is *black*, and that black stamps were never used at Nauvoo, where it was mailed. I shall admit without the slightest hesitation, that a black stamp was never used in the postoffice at Nauvoo.

Mr. Jacobs testifies that the stamp on this letter is black; and in the same letter he says that Moses Smith, who knew just as much of it as he did, publicly denied in an immense congregation in the Temple that it was black. So thus far the testimony is evenly balanced and proves nothing.

Now, let me remind you, sister, that this letter had been on daily public exhibition something over four weeks at the time of the Conference at Florence, at which Jacob saw it. And it has before and since then been exhibited in all the principal cities and many of the towns and villages from the Mississippi to the Atlantic, and from the Potomac and Ohio to the Canada boundary; and scattered in all that region, a hundred thousand witnesses are ready to bear testimony that the post stamp on my letter of appointment was red, and not black.

The letter, though badly worn, is yet preserved. Its identity can be proved by ten thousand witnesses. And it remains in my hands, to cry out, "false witness, perjury," against all who say it has or had a black stamp. Look at it. It will answer for itself that the stamp is red, and not black. Go with me through the

seventeen States, through which it has been exhibited, four of them before Jacob saw it, and witnesses will rise up like an exhalation, in city, town and hamlet, to prove it the identical, original letter with the same original red stamp on, which Jacob saw.

I will hold that letter before Norton Jacob's eyes in the judgment of the great day of God Almighty, till that red stamp shall burn his heart and soul like livid fire, and his seared eyes shall confess that it is *red*; only *his heart* is black.

Jacob says, also, that the letters are larger than those of the genuine stamp. My only reply is, measure it. It has been measured a thousand times already, and no man yet has detected a difference.

Mr. Jacob further asserts, that soon after he examined the records of the postoffice at Nauvoo, and ascertained that during the month in which my letter purported to have been written, June, 1844, no letter was mailed at Nauvoo for any part of Wisconsin.

Whether this is a mere blunder or an intentional falsehood, I am unable to say. Probably it is the latter.

By the rules of the postoffice department, at that time very few letters going to any office out of the State in which they were mailed, were sent directly to their destination. All letters from Nauvoo to the eastern part of Wisconsin, the northern part of Indiana, or any part of Michigan, were required to go through the distributing office at Chicago.

So Mr. Jacob, in order to know that no letter was mailed to me at Burlington, Wisconsin, in June, 1844, must have found that for that month there were no mails sent to Chicago, D. P. O., from the postoffice at Nauvoo.

I think that Mr. Jacob will not assert that for a whole month, a period filled with events of terrible interest, during which the entire correspondence with more than five hundred elders must have passed through the distributing office at

Chicago, not one letter was mailed from Nauvoo to the Chicago D. P. O. Unless he is prepared to assert this, he has not advanced one step towards showing that my letter of appointment was not sent, as it purports to have been.

To put this matter fully to an end, I will state to you that the day previous to Moses Smith's speaking in the upper room of the Temple, which Jacob mentions, a large number of gentlemen examined the account of mails sent from the office at Nauvoo, and found that on the 19th of June, the date of the post-mark on my letter of appointment, a considerable package of letters were mailed at Nauvoo, sent to the Chicago D. P. O., one of which was paid 18 3/4 cents.

Moses Smith stated this fact at the same time that he contradicted the false witness of Jacob about the stamp, and challenged the examination of the account by all who doubted. I am assured that several hundred went immediately from the Temple to the postoffice to make the examination, but were denied admission.

The next day it was found that the account of mails sent for the second quarter of the year, 1844, had been withdrawn from the files of the office, and for two years at least they were not returned. I presume they never have been. This fact is sufficiently significant.

But the evidence of the mailing of the letter could not be suppressed by this means. The account of mails received for distribution at Chicago D. P. O. credited this same package to Nauvoo; and the account of mails distributed charged this paid letter to Burlington, Wisconsin. So, instead of the postoffice records showing that no such letter was sent, they show clearly that it was sent and received.

Since this falsehood of the Brighamites was set on foot, I have printed more than ten thousand copies of works containing the above statement of facts, and challenging all Brighamites to test them

by examining the records, if they dare, and not one has done it. You can draw such conclusions as you think these facts warrant.

My judgment is, that since the world began, never were witnesses so effectually impeached as are these who have attempted to prove this letter of appointment a forgery. We will lay Norton Jacob by with the other false witnesses, to be sent in due time to his own place. With him in this condemnation also is Crandell Dunn, whose false witness you will find in the *Millennial Star*. (1846, p. 93.)

John Taylor has put his certificate on record "that Joseph Smith never wrote, nor caused to be written, the letter that Strang exhibits, containing his appointment."* (*Millennial Star*, 1846, Vol. viii, p. 94.) This is certifying too much. Taylor makes himself too willing a witness.

If Taylor spent most of his time in the society of Joseph, and was very intimate with him, he might express an opinion that he did not write or dictate a prophetic letter, and in a doubtful case such an opinion would have some weight. But when he says, "I do know," he asserts what no man can know. Man cannot keep such sleepless vigils and watch his brother so closely, as to know that he has not dictated the writing of a

**Philadelphia, August 29th. 1846.*

For the satisfaction of all whom it may concern, I here state, that at the time of Mr. Strang's letter of appointment to the presidency of the church purports to have been written him by Joseph Smith, which was, according to the date of said letter, only about ten days before he was killed, I was with him nearly all the time, and am a member of the only council that could legally act in cases which that letter refers to—that I attended every council that was called in which Joseph Smith presided, after that time—that I did not forsake him—I was with him and Hyrum in prison and in death—that when they fell as martyrs, my blood mingled with theirs, having received four balls in my body. And I do know that Joseph Smith never wrote, nor caused to be written, the letter that Strang exhibits, containing his appointment, and I also know that he is an impostor, a false and wicked man. His letter of appointment is a near relative of John C. Bennett's famous revelation. It was brought into being through some such process, and I warn all the Saints to beware of that base and wicked man.

JOHN TAYLOR.

Millennial Star, Vol. viii, p. 93.

particular letter. He has testified too steep. Having testified what he cannot know, he has cast a strong shade of doubt on all he says.

In the same certificate Taylor says, "I am a member of the only council which could legally act in cases which that letter refers to." Now the subject matter of that letter, under God Almighty, belonged exclusively to the First Presidency, as any one will see by reading it.

Was John Taylor a member of the First Presidency? Of course not. Then he is a false witness. And the universal rule, false in one thing, false in all, applies to him.

I was about laying him aside with the rest of the false witnesses, but there is a particular evasiveness in his testimony, as though he was filled with a fearful looking for the fiery indignation and wrath of God, against those who bear false witness against his anointed, and hope to dodge the Devil by captiousness in language.

He asserts that he was present at every council *in which Joseph presided*. This might all be true, and daily meetings of the First Presidency, which he did not attend. Hyrum could preside, as well as Joseph.

So his denial of the genuineness of the letter which "Strang exhibits," may be applied to a printed copy, as well as the manuscript original, and thus he may think to have the benefit of a falsehood, without the responsibility for telling it. I would not suspect him of such contemptible evasiveness, but that it is his only escape from the most willful and unblushing falsehood.

It is seldom that any one having a letter in possession, if its genuineness was disputed, could absolutely show it. No matter how perfect the hand writing or post stamp, it may be said, "they might have been forged." I ask you, which one of the written revelations is surrounded by as much evidence of genuineness as this.

First of all, the letter is prophetic. Many things were predicted in it so improbable, the Brighamites formerly appealed to them as evidence that it was not genuine. Among these is the prediction of the necessity of a refuge for the saints *out of Nauvoo*. You know how fearfully this has been fulfilled.

It was received at Voree before any notice of Joseph's death or arrest reached there, and nothing is more certain than that that fearful tragedy struck the whole country with astonishment. To suppose that *such* a letter would have been forged at *that* time, is merely ridiculous. In the chapter of accidents it would not stand one chance in a million of making a genuine hit.

Moreover, if a forgery, the crime must have been committed by some person having no conceivable interest in it, and who has never come forward to claim or seek any advantage growing out of it, and must have been worked through the post office somewhere by official connivance and criminal contrivance.

For it is beyond contradiction, and has been proved by an abundance of witnesses, now living, that this letter did reach Burlington in the mail, duly enveloped and billed as from Chicago, and was taken from the office and carried to me, and read, and its contents made public the same day.

To believe that it is a forgery, you must believe that all these difficulties were encountered and overcome by some persons unknown, and not yet suspected, and for what purpose? None, within man's imagination. So much more credulous is unbelief than the strongest faith.

A fact worth all the rest is, that in the many thousand places in which this letter has been exhibited, its genuineness has never been questioned, except at Florence, Michigan; and among the quarter of a million of people who have examined it, nearly all interested in discrediting it, Brighamites, because it was evidence of my calling, and Gentiles,

because it was evidence of the truth of Mormonism, nobody ever questioned its genuineness, except less than a half dozen Brighamite elders. All the rest who call it a forgery, are persons who never saw it.

No other fact goes further in support of the divine institution of Mormonism; no other fact in its support is so universally credited. What an infatuation on the part of Mormons to seek to discredit it. It quite equals the perversity with which several leading Mormons have long sought to destroy the credibility of the original witnesses to the Book of Mormon; a blunder and a crime of which Mr. Ferris, late Secretary of Utah, in his book against Mormonism, took advantage with most telling force.

When nearly all the world were interested in impeaching this letter, out of a quarter of a million who have examined it, less than a half dozen have questioned its genuineness. This fact alone raises about as strong a case of human evidence as the mind of man can conceive.

But, pressing the inquiry, on what ground did they dispute it? Not that the post mark was made of black ink, or was made with too large letters; for no such fact existed, and no such was ever suggested till it was stated at Nauvoo, as a kind of sweep all, to silence inquiry, not expecting it would ever reach me, to be contradicted.

The only objection made to it then, was, that the post mark, or stamp, had a dot at the left of the top of the J in "June," which ought not to be there. This is conceded. My answer to it then was, that there were so many chances by which such a dot could be made without design, that its presence proved nothing.

The question was discussed at length, as well as every other objection made to the appointment of a prophet in that manner, and the result was that I was sustained by the Conference. Thirteen elders were present, and after a majority

had expressed themselves in my favor, Green, Dunn and Jacob counseled *caution* and *prudence*, and proposed cautious and prudent resolutions, to the effect that "those of the elders who were satisfied with the evidence of my calling, might proclaim it, taking themselves the responsibility in case it should prove an error, and those who were not satisfied should say nothing on the subject, till further directions." Such was the compromise which my opponents were glad to make, to avoid my being fully recognized by the Conference at Florence; facts which fully appear by the original records of the Conference.

After the adjournment of the Conference, these men began a most assiduous effort to change the face of matters, assuming authority as I have often seen Brighamites do since then; and by threatening and cajoling, partly silencing those who had been disposed to hear me, and then called them together again and assumed to lecture me, as ill bred old women lecture disobedient children of washing days.

Being told that I was to hear and not reply, and satisfied that I could not get a hearing without a quarrel, I left with one of the brethren who received me at his house, ever after which I was received as a prophet by most of the Saints who attended that Conference.

My license was demanded as I left the house, but not understanding that Elders could exercise discipline over the First President, I did not deliver it. Dunn says I had none. But if he will call on me, I will show it to him. Possibly he will say that is a forgery also. I have a good many papers that Brighamites would like to have forgeries.

So much stress was laid on the fact of the dot before the J in the mailing stamp, that a more thorough investigation was had than the subject called for, and the result was that every letter that could be found mailed at Nauvoo the

19th June, had the same dot before the J. Here then sprung up an unlooked for evidence of the genuineness of the letter of appointment, the strongest which the human mind can conceive.

However corrupt the heart, or skillfull the head, how could the forger know that on that particular day for the first time since the office was established, a little splinter would get into the mailing stamp, and mark every letter with one dot which ought not to be there? He could not have known it. It was impossible. Thus the proof that this letter was duly mailed at Nauvoo, the 19th of June, 1844, is astounding; actually overwhelming.

The single fact of this dot, once the sole ground of impeachment of this letter of appointment, has thus established its genuineness by the most singularly strong combination of facts ever presented in human evidence.

This very strength of evidence is so great as to be repugnant to the human mind. It struggles for something on which to hang a doubt, unwilling that that which rests in testimony should be absolutely beyond a doubt.

The principal point made against me at the Florence Conference was not on the genuineness of the letter of appointment, but on the right of any one except a lineal descendant of Joseph Smith to preside over the church.

The sole argument was that the priesthood went by lineage, and would descend to the oldest son of Joseph; to which I replied as God gave me utterance, showing that in the olden time the prophetic office did not go by lineage; and by sections fourteen and fifty of the Doctrine and Covenants that it did go by appointment. These two sections unfortunately for his case were introduced by Mr. Dunn, and thus I became aware that Joseph had given a law on the subject, and obtained my first knowledge of that book.

I do not doubt that this statement of

the action of the Florence Conference will be disputed by those who support Brigham; but there are a few facts which will guide you to the truth of the matter. At that time every act of any conference which favored Brigham was selected and preserved with care, and published in the Times and Seasons. From that time forward equal care was used to obtain and publish anything they could pick up against me.

Now the proceedings of this Florence Conference, though taken to Nauvoo by Smith and Jacob, were never published at all. Yet so anxious were they to say something against me, they inserted a squib, saying I had been cut off, as though a man could be cut off without being tried, or a prophet could be brought under the yoke of the Twelve. The fact that they did not publish the doings of the Conference shows that it was against them.

Upon this I shall rest the evidence that I did receive a genuine letter of appointment, to the prophetic office from Joseph Smith, written a few days previous to his death. But in preferring to rest the evidence here, I wish to notify you that there is also a mass of evidence showing the writing and sending of that letter, quite as satisfactory as this of its reception. This evidence is now in a scattered state, and the task of arraying it so as to do justice to the subject is more than I have time now to undertake. But when it is needed it will be forthcoming, and will show that some of the Brighamite leaders are just as well assured of my calling to the prophetic office as of their own to any priesthood they really and legally hold.

Such is the mode in which I came to the prophetic office, and such are the evidences that I did so come in. That these evidences are satisfactory, I believe no one will dispute or question, but such as are predetermined that this truth shall not be true. The next important inquiry is, whether I have shown myself

in possession of the gifts and blessings pertaining to this priesthood. Upon this I will give you a few facts.

You are aware that the prophet Joseph, among the other callings which God had given him, by his own voice, was also a translator; and that his first important duty was translating ancient records from unknown languages, and at the time of his death the work of translation was not near finished, but remained to be done.

That I hold and exercise the gifts of revelation and translation was well established in the following transaction:

On the thirteenth day of September, 1845, I called together a number of persons and related to them that God had revealed to me that there was in Voree, buried in the ground, an ancient record, which I was required to obtain and translate; and relating to them the revelation, I took them to an old oak tree and told them that it was deposited there in old time, and the tree had grown over it. I then asked them to examine everything relating to it most critically, so that they could stand as witnesses, and then dig it up.

Four persons, Aaron Smith, Jirah B. Wheelan, James M. VanNostrand, and Edward Whitcomb, did so and certify as follows:

"The case (containing the record) was found imbedded in indurated clay, so closely fitting it that it broke in taking out, and the earth below the soil was so hard as to be dug with difficulty, even with a pickax. Over the case was found a flat stone, about one foot wide each way, and three inches thick, which appeared to have undergone the action of fire, and fell in pieces after a few minutes exposure to the air. The digging extended in the clay about eighteen inches, there being two kinds of earth of a different color and appearance above it.

"We examined as we dug all the way with the utmost care; and we say, with the utmost confidence, that no part of

the earth through which we dug exhibited any sign or indication that it had been moved or disturbed at any time previous. The roots of the tree struck down on every side very closely, extending below the case, and closely interwoven with roots from other trees. None of these had been broken or cut away. * * * *

"In fine, we found an alphabetical and pictorial record, carefully cased up, buried deep in the earth, and covered with a flat stone, with an oak tree one foot in diameter growing over it, with every evidence that the senses can give that it had lain there as long as the tree had been growing."

These occurrences waked up the whole country to a high state of excitement, and several thousand persons came to examine the ground and the plates, and inquire after the occurrence. The whole country was filled with the fame of the occurrence, and numerous newspaper notices of the matter were given to the public. Among them was the following in the Southport (now Kenosha) Telegraph, edited by C. Latham Sholes, a man of distinguished talent and unblemished character, who has several times since then represented Kenosha in one or the other House of the Wisconsin Legislature, and held the office of State Printer and Secretary of State:

"Our curiosity was sufficiently excited to induce us to make ourselves more fully acquainted with the circumstances and facts. For this end we visited the gentleman alluded to as Seer or Prophet. We were cordially received, the plates were shown us, and we examined the spot from which they purported to have been taken.

"The prophet appears to us a very intelligent man, devoid of anything like enthusiasm; and, so far as we could judge, *honest and earnest in all he said*. The men who subscribe the statement (of which the foregoing is an extract) *are said to be among the most HONEST*

and INTELLIGENT in the neighborhood; and, taking it altogether, it is something to stagger ordinary credulity.

"The popular opinion will doubtless call it a humbug. So should we from the natural impulse of our mind. *But when the testimony appears in opposition to such impulse, we are content—to have no opinion about it.*"

This transaction presented the world with the strongest evidence ever put into its possession in favor of Mormonism. Had all who have a name to be Saints but made half the effort to push its consequence before the public, that they have to discredit it, there can be no doubt that the Church would now have embraced hundreds of thousands in its bosom, who, as it is, are ignorant of the gospel, and believe not on prophets. Never before, since the world began, did the people act a policy so suicidal as the Mormon attempt to discredit this testimony; an attempt which has succeeded only so far as to do mischief; the end will never be accomplished. The most that skeptics can say is, that though the evidence is unanswerable, they will let it alone, and have no opinion on the subject.

For you readily perceive that whatever inducement I may have had to commit a fraud in the premises, there was no opportunity whatever. In order to succeed in a fraud, I must have deceived successfully four men, deeply interested in the *bona fides* of the transaction, whose facilities of observing the truth were such that deception was—simply impossible. The circumstances and their characters were such that their veracity has never been questioned. And all the facts were open to public criticism.

These plates I translated. As to the accuracy of the translation the world and the Saints know just what I have told them, and what God has revealed to them. That is all they know of the plates which Joseph translated. God made him a witness of the work, and the

world must take the translation on his testimony. So he made me a witness after Joseph's death, and has vouchsafed me proper evidence of this calling, and the world will have to take this translation on my testimony.

This being the proper rule of testimony I have not thought fit to go behind it; but it may not be improper to say that the accuracy of the translation has been tested to their satisfaction by a body of learned men, acquainted with the modern discoveries shedding light on the lost Levantine languages. And the result satisfied them that this record was written in a language bearing a common relation to all the languages spoken in the earliest ages in the Levant, and that the translation was genuine.

It would be too tedious to relate the process by which these tests were made, and they might not be well understood, except by men of profound learning; but they were made by those who wished to make a case against me, and the result was clearly in my favor, and so acknowledged without the slightest hesitation.

All the facts surrounding this matter were so clear and indisputable, and the results derivable therefrom so significant of my calling, that Brighamites were for a long time at a loss on which side to make their attack. It finally came, not upon the veracity of my witnesses and testimony, but upon the divine authority of the record. Orson Hyde first took ground in the following beautiful "fruit of his saintly spirit:"

"James J. Strang, successor of Sidney Rigdon, Judas Iscariot, Cain & Co., Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of his most Gracious Majesty, Lucifer the I., assisted by his Allied Contemporary advisors, John C. Bennett, William Smith, G. J. Adams and John E. Page, Secretaries of Legislation, have all acknowledged, taught and declared that the plates said to be found in the earth by Strang, in a supernatural way, were so very rusty and defaced by

time, that they could not be deciphered without undergoing some chemical process, being scoured up," etc.—(*Millennial Star*, Vol. viii., p. 123.)

To the tail of this sweeping falsehood Mr. Hyde has hung on the words "as we have been credibly informed," in a vain effort to cheat the Almighty out of that law which says, "thou shalt not bear false witness."

On this falsehood concerning the plates, Mr. Hyde quotes from the *Book of Mormon* (Alma, Ch. xvii., p. 349, Eng. ed.) to show that the plates are not a divine record. If the facts were with him, the argument would be conclusive.

But no such facts existed in reference to the plates, and Mr. Hyde had not had any such information concerning them.

He was then but three months from Philadelphia, where his whole congregation and thousands of others had examined the plates, and received prompt answers to such inquiries as they thought proper to make.

The delegation of American Elders who accompanied him to England, had met the matter in all the cities of Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York and Boston, in each of which places they and the public had seen the plates, and examined them to their heart's content.

Not one of them was ever informed that the plates had been rusty, or defaced in any way whatever. Had any one been disposed to tell such a story, it was impossible. The plates themselves gave the lie to it. The minutest tool marks, and the slightest scratches of the material used in polishing them, were visible. They are yet, and stand as the unerring witness that the plates have undergone no corrosion.

Hyde says these statements were resorted to, "to prove the great antiquity" of the plates. The reason is as false as the assertion. The antiquity of the plates rested on the indubitable testimony (never met nor attempted to be met by apostate or gentile) that an oak

tree as large as a man's body had grown over the plates since they were deposited, and that the region of country had been unvisited by and unknown to civilized men till since the institution of Mormonism.

The only circumstances on which Hyde could found a pretense for such false witness is, the fact that the plates were covered with a substance resembling gum elastic, which I scraped off with my thumb nail, before the form of the engraving could be traced perfectly. And upon this issue of veracity, between Hyde and myself, I appealed to an inspection of the plates, which any person can make at leisure, and hear my statement of their condition when found, as well as the statements of the witnesses. And I tell you, distinctly, that this is a thing about which there is no controversy. Whatever dispute or doubt exists on the subject, is the merest deliberate falsehood. But when I speak thus plainly, you must not expect me to follow Orson Hyde in his blackguardism. Having abundance of truth I cannot stoop to his style. I have no use for his spirit.

Pursuing the same course of duty, I have also translated a large amount of other records, among which is a considerable portion of the *Book of the Law of the Lord*, and of the history of the going into Egypt, and the oppression of Israel there.

Apostates, Brighamites, as well as others, have objected to this, because I am of the lineage of Judah, insisting that the control of the dispensation belonged to Ephraim, instead of Judah. As usual, this objection has gone back upon those that made it.

As certain as it is that the stick of Ephraim, or *Book of Mormon*, should be brought forth and translated by a prophet of the tribe of Ephraim, so sure is it that he shall be succeeded by a prophet of the tribe of Judah, who shall translate the stick of Judah, or the

Bible. (Book of Mormon, 2d Nephi, Ch. ii, and see Ezek. xxxvii, 16 to 19.)

The following up of the inquiry on this subject has brought to notice a long train of prophecies, all establishing beyond controversy, that the dispensation of the fullness of times is to pass and remain permanently in the tribe of Judah, and the keys of it to be held by the house of David forever. (See 2d Sam. vii, 8 to 16; Ps. lxxxix, 3, 4, 19 to 37; *Id.* lxxii, 2, 5 to 17; Isaiah, ix, 6, 7; *Id.* xi, 1 to 5, 10 to 13; *Id.* iii, 13, 14, 15; *Id.* lix, 16 to 21; Ezek., xxxvii, 21 to 28; *Id.* xxxiv, 20 to 25.)

Knowing, as all the Saints do, that Brigham Young belongs to another tribe, of which Moses and the rest of the prophets and apostles spoke nothing concerning the kingdom, these prophecies all become consuming witnesses against his pretensions, and a strong support of my right to stand at the head of the dispensation.

As First President, I have regularly presided over the Church, and took the direction of its affairs in all the world, according to the law of God.

As prophet, I have foretold in the name of God, the ills that were coming on men, and directed all who received the word of the Lord how and where to come out from among the wicked, that they receive not of their plagues.

I have obtained covenants and promises of God, and at his hand obtained an everlasting inheritance for the Saints, which I have divided among them by lot, without cost or price. God is our God, and we are his people forevermore.

As a Seer, I have seen the visions of the Almighty, and as a Revelator, have received knowledge of his purposes and commandments, and made them known among the children of men.

As a translator, I have brought forth hidden treasures, and revealed the old record to all who love the truth, and seek unto it. The visions of the past, and the hidden lore of future ages, are laid by the side of present hopes and future knowledge.

As an apostle, I have borne a faithful testimony of the kingdom and the coming of the Lord Jesus. I have fought a good fight. I have kept the faith. I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. In the treasure-house of the Almighty there is laid up for me a crown of glory, richer than all diadems of earthly kings.

Of all that dwell on earth, God has made me the most happy. From men I fear no evil. May God bless you abundantly with the same blessings, and especially with the love of the truth.

Truly and sincerely,

JAMES J. STRANG.

